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THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION  
PART III



THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

PART III

SARATOGA AND BRANDYWINE  
VALLEY FORGE  
ENGLAND AND FRANCE AT WAR

BY THE RIGHT HON.

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*At the End of the Volume*

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# THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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## CHAPTER I

AFTER TRENTON. THE WAR GOVERNORS. CONGRESS AND  
THE ASSEMBLIES. DEARTH OF MILITARY STORES

THE battles of Trenton and Princeton had snatched America from instant and utter ruin; but for several months to come her discomfiture was averted not by her own strength, but by the indolence which beset, and the illusions which misled, the British general. On the sixth of January, 1777, the Republican army arrived at Morristown in such a state of exhaustion and disorder "that a fresh and resolute body of five hundred men might have demolished the whole."<sup>1</sup> Scores and hundreds of the younger soldiers had turned aside for shelter into the woods all along the line of march, and flung themselves down to sleep on the carpet of pine-needles which covered the frozen soil. When the last group of stragglers filed into the village which had been selected for their winter quarters, the entire force, regulars and militia together, amounted at the most to four thousand men.

For a long while to come the numbers of the army never much exceeded, and at times even sank below, that miserable figure. The commencement of March found Washington still at the head of only four thousand soldiers; whereas, according to his computation, General Howe had much more than twice that force already in the Jerseys, available for an immediate advance. Why in the world that officer hesitated to march upon

<sup>1</sup> That is Gordon's account, which he in all probability had direct from Washington himself. It is fully borne out by Washington's despatches.

Philadelphia, and eat up Washington's army on the way, was a source of standing wonder to Washington himself. His confidential letters, during the earlier part of the year 1777, compose a scathing and unanswerable indictment of the British general's strategy. "Howe's men," (so the American commander wrote,) "are well disciplined, well officered, and well appointed. Ours are raw militia, badly officered, and under no government. His numbers cannot, in any short time, be augmented. His situation with respect to horses and forage is bad, very bad, I believe. But will it be better? No; on the contrary, worse. With what propriety then can he miss so favourable an opportunity of striking a capital stroke against a city from which we derive so many advantages, which would give such *éclat* to his arms, and strike such a damp upon ours?"

Such was the plan which, in Washington's opinion, Howe ought to have adopted; and what a competent general most dreads, it is an axiom in warfare that his opponent should do. The Royal army contained German officers, trained in the ideas of Frederic the Great, — that untiring captain who kept the field in all weathers, and who won Leuthen, the most brilliant victory of his generation, on a December afternoon. These veterans were now surprised and disgusted at finding themselves under the orders of a commander who religiously observed the antiquated fashion of housing himself and his troops throughout the winter, and who apparently interpreted that season as covering all the spring, and some portion of early summer. The gallant and experienced Von Donop, burning to show that Hessians could fight effectively when they were judiciously led, insisted on the principle that "with rebels no campaign ought to be made," but that hostilities should be pushed on continuously, in January as in July, until the army of the insurgents was broken up, and their government dissolved. Von Donop was unquestionably in the right. Here was a war which should have

been waged without intermission of time, or relaxation of energy; for the depth of winter was Sir William Howe's most favourable opportunity. *His* ranks were always full. *His* soldiers were always at his disposal. Their regiment was their only home; and, as long as they were on the American side of the ocean, they had no distractions which could tempt them from their duty, and no occupations except to march and to fight. Their professional spirit was high; and they entertained an honourable confidence that, on fair terms, they were invincible in battle. "Our army is strong, finely clothed and in excellent condition; full of courage and beautifully drilled; capable of looking into the white of the eye of Washington and all his tatterdemalions." So a German captain once boasted; and in January 1777 that belief, and nothing short of it, was the accepted creed of privates and officers in every Royal brigade.

Howe's troops were very numerous; while the circumstances of the time were such that he could never expect them to be so numerous again. He had ten thousand men in the Jerseys, with as many more in New York City; and New York, with Lord Howe's battleships lying in the Bay, and his frigates scouring the North and East Rivers, could safely spare almost the whole of its garrison for active service in the open country. Two fine divisions of infantry, moreover, were eating King George's rations, and drawing his pay, in their cantonments on Rhode Island, with no advantage whatever to King George's interests. But with Washington the case was very different indeed. Warm weather brought his militia almost spontaneously out of their villages; but, when the autumn was over, and the frost had set in, they were as hard to move from their accustomed retreats as animals which had entered upon their period of hibernation.<sup>1</sup> Even those regular

<sup>1</sup> General Schuyler, who had learned the fact from bitter experience, said that "home-sickness in winter was the periodical American distemper." *American Archives* for December, 1776.

levies, which were in course of enlistment for permanent service in the Continental army, would not leave for the front until the weather settled. Washington complained that he had repeatedly written to all the recruiting officers to forward their soldiers as fast as they could arm and clothe them; but month followed month, and he could not get a man to come near him. "To expect," he wrote, "that General Howe will not avail himself of our weak state is, I think, to say in so many words that he is unfit for the trust reposed in him."<sup>1</sup>

Sir William Howe greatly over-estimated the strength of his opponent. The secrecy, the rapidity, and the extraordinarily successful audacity of American tactics during the last week of 1776, and the first week of 1777, had impressed the general of the British army with an idea that he had been outnumbered as well as out-manœuvred; and there was one at hand who spared no pains to prevent that impression from being prematurely effaced. When George Washington deemed it incumbent upon him to practise deception, he showed capabilities and aptitudes which placed him on a level with the most famous masters in the higher branches of the art. He began by addressing himself to those American generals who exercised separate commands within touch, or hearing, of any portion of Howe's outposts;—inciting them, in urgent and most specific language, to prompt and strenuous, and above all to ostentatious and noisy, action. He wrote for willing eyes. George Clinton forthwith set his troops in motion, and cleared out the Royal garrisons from the Western bank of the Hudson; while General Heath,—with almost quaint scrupulosity of obedience to the injunctions of a chief by whom he had willingly allowed himself to be superseded, and under whom it was his pride to serve,—advanced in force upon King's Bridge. On every one of eleven consecutive days there ensued

<sup>1</sup> Washington to the President of Congress, 26th January, 1777; to John Augustine Washington, 12th April, 1777.



alarms and excursions, with lavish firing of cannon and muskets, accompanied by very little killing or wounding, up and down the whole river-front of the Westchester peninsula; and the show ended by the kindling of bonfires in long and well-ordered rows, so situated as to convince the military authorities in New York that a powerful American army was assembled at the point most convenient for crossing the East River with a view to assail the city.<sup>1</sup> From his own ill-furnished lines Washington sent forth detachments of partisans who roved the adjoining districts far and near, capturing trains of waggons and troops of prisoners, and diffusing everywhere panic, and bustle, and rumour to an extent out of all proportion to their own scanty numbers. On the twenty-fifth January, as if he were already undisputed master of the entire country-side, he issued a proclamation declaring that all persons who had accepted Lord Howe's offer of protection, and had sworn fidelity to King George, must retire at once within territory occupied by the British army, unless they were prepared to take an oath of allegiance to the United States of America. The citizens of New Jersey responded eagerly to Washington's invitation. They did not want the Hessians back into their parlours and store-chambers; they took the proposed oath freely, and observed it a great deal better than they had observed its predecessor; and they gave very practical evidence of having learned the lesson that promises of protection are worth little to people who lack spirit to protect themselves. Armed bands of resentful yeomen soon beleaguered all the roads along which fresh meat and vegetables travelled to New York, and along which salt meat and biscuit were sent out to the British cantonments upon the Raritan River. Very little that would tempt the appetite found its way to the mess-tables

<sup>1</sup> "The enemy," (Washington wrote to Heath on the fifth January,) "are in great consternation; and it has been determined in council that you should move down towards New York with a considerable force, as if you had a design upon the city."

within the city; and at New Brunswick, the advanced post on the extreme flank of Howe's contracted lines, there were days when the garrison had nothing to eat at all.<sup>1</sup>

The leaders of the Revolution entertained a strong, and most just, presentiment that the fighting, when it again began in earnest, would neither flag, nor terminate, until the issue of the struggle had been virtually decided. It was for their adversary to settle whether the interval which preceded a general clash of arms was to be long, or brief; but they fully appreciated the value of every day, and every hour, which Sir William Howe's procrastination placed at their disposal. The task in front of them was of stupendous magnitude; and their labours were conducted under very peculiar difficulties. Their army was still to make. Their administrative system was confused in practice, and totally incomprehensible in theory. The very idea of a supreme national authority was new and unfamiliar to Americans, and the exercise of it unpopular; each State government had its own ways of doing public business, which it not unfrequently pursued with the result of undoing the wiser work of others; while the functions and responsibilities of every man in a high executive position remained uncertain and ill-defined, and his official power was for the most part only such as he could induce his countrymen voluntarily to concede to him. But the sense of an imminent and transcendent crisis stirred every heart, and nerved every arm. Even those personal jealousies and antagonisms, which were unpleasantly rife, quickened, at least as much as they hampered, the activities of ambitious soldiers and politicians. It was the season of a great revival. Reasonable hope had succeeded to blank despair; and the final and triumphant establishment of the Republic was largely due to the feats of creative energy which were accomplished, during the

<sup>1</sup> The lie of the ground across New Jersey, between Philadelphia and New York, may be seen in the large map at the end of this volume.

first five months of 1777, by her agents on the continent of Europe, and her servants at home.

Every corner throughout the entire workshop of the Revolution was pervaded by Washington's influence, which he was in a mood to exert pleasantly to himself, and acceptably to others. That external serenity, which for a long while past he had maintained by dint of constant and conscious effort, was henceforward the natural expression and symptom of the tranquil and hopeful spirit which reigned within. From this point onwards, for many months to come, the reader of his confidential letters ceases to notice those occasional ejaculations of distress, and even of anguish, which were wrung from him so long as he could discern no end to the misery, and no light in the dark future, of what he then so frequently described as his "bleeding country." By every rule of war, as his cold reason informed him, he still lay at the mercy of his antagonist; but none the less was he comfortably aware that he had to do, not with the ideal army-leader whose existence is taken for granted by writers on the Art of Strategy, but with the actual lethargic personality of Sir William Howe. A general who, with no military justification whatever, had wasted one month, might in all likelihood be counted upon to waste another, and yet another. But the blow, though long postponed, was certain to fall at last; and, — come late, come soon, — it should not be Washington's own fault if he was unprepared to meet it. Active, vigilant, and courteously but indomitably persistent, throughout this momentous period he was a centre of force and vitality for the whole Confederacy. Every successive post carried forth, to all quarters of the compass, his spirited exhortations, and minute workmanlike instructions, with regard to the levying, officering, drilling, clothing, and arming the additional battalions of regular soldiers which Congress had empowered him to raise; and almost every letter contained an earnest entreaty for the temporary loan of militia regiments in sufficient

quantity to tide over the interval which necessarily must elapse before his New Model Army, (for by that historical and redoubtable name it had some title to be called) was in a fit condition to take to the field.<sup>1</sup>

Washington's principal coadjutor in his scheme of military reorganisation was General Henry Knox, whom, during these months of fruitful activity, he sent as his confidential lieutenant to the spot where judicious management might be expected to produce the most speedy and valuable results. Boston, (as John Adams told his wife with great justice,) was now the safest place on the American continent. The citizens had erected batteries on commanding points, and kept hulks at the mouth of the harbour, ready to be scuttled and sunk, for purposes of obstruction, in case of an attack by the British fleet; but they had ceased to contemplate a second siege as a real and formidable probability. The consciousness of security did not render them ungrateful or selfish. They recognised that their own community, having been so generously and chivalrously assisted in the hour of her sorest need, was under a heavy obligation to other States and cities which now were in the forefront of peril and the mid-furnace of the war. It was an obligation which they had adequate, and even over-abundant, means to discharge. The province of which Boston, in defiance of the most foolish and fatal Statute that ever received the Royal Assent, was again the Capital, possessed the power, as well as the will, to support more than her due share of the common national burden. Massachusetts, with her large, homogeneous, and thickly planted population, — always fervid, and (ever since the great Tory emigration,) all but unanimous, for the Revolution, — was much the most fertile recruiting-ground to which Washington had access. Her prosperity had revived;

<sup>1</sup> Washington's circular letter to the New England States, of January the twenty-fourth, gives a stirring and striking exposition of the sacrifices and exertions which, in his view, the situation demanded. It is well worth perusal.

although the tide of her opulence no longer flowed along the ancient channel ; for the commerce of Boston with Great Britain was for the time destroyed quite as efficaciously as the author of the Boston Port Bill had desired and devised. That amount of success undoubtedly attended Lord North's parliamentary legislation. Boston, however, already enjoyed a substitute, and more than an equivalent, for her former trade with the mother country. She might now, in despite of Downing Street, exchange goods with every mercantile nation of Europe ; and she had discovered a gold-mine in her opportunities for privateering. The Loyalists in London were informed by a brother-exile, who had left New England very early in 1777, that the harbour of Boston was strongly fortified, and that the inhabitants were sanguine in their expectations of a French war, and encouraged in their errors by Danish, French, and Spanish traders, who swarmed in the port. "King Street," (so this gentleman's account ran,) "is almost as much thronged with people of all nations as the Strand and Cornhill ; two hundred and eighty-three prizes carried in by the twenty-third December ; four vessels with goods from France, with powder, small-arms, clothing, and other articles ; one with twenty thousand suits of military clothing, an article not a little wanted among them." The gains of those concerned were enormous. One young fellow had made twenty thousand pounds sterling by privateering ; and a remarkably clever citizen, who formerly had been anything but a Cræsus, was now the busiest and most important, and very nearly the richest, personage in Boston.<sup>1</sup>

Although Massachusetts was willing to spend her wealth, both new and old, and her very considerably resources of men and material, in furthering the cause of the Revolution, she was not so ready to place herself unreservedly at the disposal of the central government. A genuine enthusiasm for the idea of a united America

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Curwen to the Reverend Isaac Smith ; March 19, 1777.



took root early in the province, and grew fast; but local patriotism, of an intense type, prevailed in many quarters; and in some powerful minds that sentiment was narrow even to the verge of exclusiveness. The representatives of Massachusetts in Congress had taken a forward part in electing a Virginian to the post of Commander-in-Chief. Their action met with the approbation of their constituents, who had long admired Washington from a distance, and who soon learned to esteem him as favourably as if he had first seen the light in one of the Beacon Street mansions which overlooked the Common. They still, however, watched Virginians in general with suspicion and dislike; and, to their view, Washington had far too many Southerners about him. But that self-reliant and very discreet great man, while he worked his staff-officers hard, and almost mercilessly, was not in the habit of taking his opinions from aides-de-camp or secretaries. He was firmly persuaded that the people of Massachusetts would do their part, and more than their part, at that all-important conjuncture, if, — and only if, — they were handled skilfully, considerately, honestly, and (above all things) by one of themselves.

The precise instrument which Washington required lay within reach of his grasp. Henry Knox was at home in Boston, and had that familiar acquaintance with all her leading people which would naturally be possessed by a very popular bookseller in the most literary of cities. His fellow-townsmen were exceedingly proud of him; and well they might be; for he was a noted specialist in the branch of industry which then concerned their safety the most. In the depth of a frightful winter he had brought Southwards, through a pathless wilderness, the train of battering cannon which eventually expelled the invader from Boston; during a night of tempest he had transported across the Delaware the large contingent of field-pieces that did so much to decide the event at Trenton; and in battle he was never contented until his guns, and he, were



within point-blank range of the enemy. A homely warrior, till the close of his life he looked the prosperous tradesman. He was welcome everywhere with his jolly, rolling figure, and his hearty voice, which had often risen loud and clear above much more terrifying noises than the street-traffic on a Boston pavement.<sup>1</sup> General Knox repaired to his native city ostensibly with the object of raising a battalion of artillery; but he was entrusted by the Commander-in-Chief with an unwritten commission to use his influence, his experience, and his tact in supervising the general military arrangements of Massachusetts. Washington, — who kept his powers of mystification for Sir William Howe, and did not expend them on his own countrymen, — told the State authorities that he relied upon them to supply recruits for his new battalions in proportion, not to the actual population of the province, but to the excessive and exceptional numbers which they had put into the field already. His frankness evoked a very practical response. Massachusetts had contributed three quarters of the force that first blockaded Boston. During the cruel and prolonged campaign, which had only just ended, her sons fought in every engagement, starved and shivered at every bivouac, and lay buried by hundreds in those hospital cemeteries which were the winter quarters for so many soldiers of that hapless army. She had despatched sixteen thousand men to the front in 1775, and fourteen thousand in 1776; and yet, before the peace came, she sent nearly forty thousand more into the Continental ranks. It was a contingent all but double of that which was furnished by any other State in the American Union.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1803 General Knox was still a favourite with Bostonians of both sexes, young and old. His outward appearance was less martial than ever. "General and Mrs. Knox," (we are told,) "grew to be enormously stout, and were perhaps the largest couple in the city of New York at the time when Washington was inaugurated as first President of the United States." *A Girl's Life Eighty Years ago, being Selections from the Letters of Eliza Southgate Bourne*; New York, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> These figures are taken from the Report communicated to Congress in 1790 by General Henry Knox, then Secretary of War. He remarks

In several of the most populous, and critically situated, among the States, Washington had the comfort and advantage of being able to rely on the services of a trustworthy auxiliary belonging to his own social class, and animated by the same lofty and disinterested motives as those which guided his own conduct. Among the actors who walked the stage during the performance of that prolonged drama, there was no more striking and characteristic group than the great war governors of the Revolution. The Prefect of a French Department, between the years 1800 and 1814, was a functionary as essential to the success of military operations as the general who led a division in the field. Napoleon's Grand Army depended for its existence on the administrator at home, whose vocation it was to keep Jacobins and Royalists in order; to see that the taxes were punctually paid, the magazines full, and the manufactories of uniforms and camp-equipments busy; to hunt up refractory conscripts; and to start batch after batch of recruits on the first stage of their journey towards the hostile frontier. Provincial Governors in the United States, between 1776 and 1782, had very similar duties to those of a Prefect of the First French Empire; but they resembled him in little else. Their exact parallel may rather be found in those Puritan country gentlemen who, in the summer of 1642, travelled down from Westminster to raise and organise the armed power of their respective counties in opposition to the Crown. These American Governors were not professional placemen, appointed from above, and taken from outside the province which was committed to their supervision. Every one of them "had established, and held for himself, the position of leading citizen in his own town,—that most valued and intangible of American distinctions"; and in a time of confusion and peril the inhabitants of each locality,

that, as far as relates to the Regular Army, the numbers are "stated from the official Returns deposited in the War Office, and may be depended upon."

who derived their origin from a nation which honoured and followed its squires, almost instinctively accepted the most important and respected among their neighbours as their natural leader.

Such was George Clinton, a soldier who came from a long line of civil and military dignitaries, and rural magnates. One of his ancestors had fought for Charles the First, and had lost his patrimonial estate in England as a punishment for his loyalty. Another brought over a large party of immigrants from Ireland, and founded a settlement on the Hudson River.<sup>1</sup> George Clinton himself was the first popularly elected Governor of New York State, and he retained his post throughout the war, fighting his administrative district as a stout captain fights his ship in battle; taking no holidays himself, and very parsimonious in the matter of furloughs, or exemptions from service, for others; sternly enforcing the penal code of war against spies and deserters; exceedingly sharp in his methods with mutineers and rioters; and never shrinking, in a case of public necessity, from fearless and autocratic action. He understood his countrymen, whose pride and satisfaction in being governed strongly by a man of their own choice, born amongst them, are in proportion to their distaste for being either ruled, or represented, by a stranger; — a feeling which the electoral provisions of their written Constitutions, State and Federal alike, so legibly and unmistakably indicate. After a first, and a very crucial, experience of George Clinton as their Governor, his fellow-citizens re-elected him no fewer than six times, and in each case for a full triennial period. He died, rich in years and in repute, during his second term of office as Vice-President of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A kinsman, and an early patron, of George Clinton was a Royal Governor of New York State, and the father of the Sir Henry Clinton who succeeded General Howe as Commander-in-Chief in America.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas M'Kean wrote to John Adams, from Philadelphia, in June 1812: "Our venerable friend Clinton has gone before us. So has the

Such, again, was William Livingston, the Governor of New Jersey. He belonged to a numerous, and exceedingly powerful, family residing within a vast manor of three hundred thousand acres, which in the seventeenth century had been acquired from the aboriginal inhabitants partly by purchase, and partly, (if New York Tory gossip is to be accepted as evidence,) by the very simple expedient of periodically rolling the boundary-stones farther back into Indian territory. The ancestor of the Livingstons sprang from an ancient and noble house in Scotland. A preacher of the Reformed Church in that country, he was driven into exile after the Restoration by episcopal persecution, and died at Rotterdam. The most notable among his descendants was from youth upwards a fierce Presbyterian. William Livingston was educated at Yale College, a veritable nursery of militant Whiggism, where he used to entertain his fellow-students by his rough and contemptuous sallies against the theory of Passive Obedience; and he now was completely in his element as the armed ruler of a population which bitterly repented having made a sincere attempt to put that ancient Jacobite doctrine into actual practice, with such lamentable consequences to their granaries, their herds, and their plate-chests. "New Jersey," (so a French officer reported to his government,) "which almost touches the fortifications of New York, has displayed heroic constancy. Its militia assembles of its own accord at the sight of a red coat. Their Governor is a Roman. The Republicans call him Brutus; the Royalists an American Nero."<sup>1</sup> Repub-

illustrious Washington, eleven years ago. I remain the only surviving member of the first American Congress, held in the City of New York in October 1765; and but three more, of whom you are one, remain alive of the second, held in this city in September, 1774." Those three were Adams, Jefferson, and Charles Carroll of Annapolis, "a very sensible gentleman, a Roman Catholic, and of the first fortune in America." Carroll long survived all the other "signers" of the Declaration of Independence; and his countrymen watched his state of health, and counted his birthdays, with a reverential, and somewhat pathetic, interest.

<sup>1</sup> B. F. Steven's *Facsimiles*; Letter 1616.

licans and Royalists united in speaking of him as a very indifferent orator; but he could make his meaning plain.<sup>1</sup> William Livingston never shirked the avowal of his principles, or blinked at the ultimate conclusions towards which they logically conducted him. As early as July 1778 he flatly pronounced that to maintain negro slavery was inconsistent with Christianity, and peculiarly odious and disgraceful in Americans, who professed to idolise liberty.

When the Civil War broke out, Jonathan Trumbull was already Governor of Connecticut. At an early stage of the controversy he perceived that it would be impossible for him to reconcile the conflicting claims of a divided patriotism, and that he must choose between the country whence his forefathers came, and the soil on which he had been born and bred;—between the Ministry which had placed him in his office, and the people who were entrusted to his charge. The hour for decision arrived; and he declared for the Revolution. He had seen his sixty-fourth birthday; but the vigour of his mind was not abated; and, if his body was more frail than in the past, that was Jonathan Trumbull's own concern, and he kept the knowledge of it to himself. His advanced years entailed upon him no visible drawbacks, and in some respects contributed much to his value and efficiency. He ruled his province absolutely, in paternal fashion, and with patriarchal authority. "Governor Trumbull," said a foreigner who knew Connecticut well, "governs this State as he pleases." Moreover he was at a time of life when his sons,—with whom, like a true New Englander, he was abundantly provided,—had all reached the military age; while some among them were of mature years, and versed in practical business. They entered the Republican army; and Trumbull, who seldom begged a favour, was always willing to use his interest for the purpose of getting them employed

<sup>1</sup> Judge Jones's *History of New York*, Volume I., Chapter I. Diary of John Adams, Aug. 27, and Sept. 1, 1774.



where bullets were flying. One of them was ere long appointed Comptroller of the Treasury, and another died Commissary General of the national forces. They all had habitually lived with their father upon terms of respectful, but affectionate and fearless, intimacy; and thus it came about that the Governor of Connecticut was provided with authentic intelligence, from the headquarters of war and administration, by members of his own family, imbued with his own public spirit, and sharing his reverence for facts and realities, and his quiet disdain of uncharitable criticism and idle scandal.

Trumbull was a representative American, who had turned his hand to many things, had grasped them firmly, and kept them all ready for use when occasion called. During nearly the whole of his working career he was engaged in trade; and he had made himself an erudite, a skilful, and an honoured lawyer. He sat nineteen years as a Judge in Probate, and four years as Chief Justice of his Colony. After quitting college he had studied divinity, with the intention of becoming a clergyman; and the Bible had taught him much which stood him in stead when his time of trial came. The higher soul of the Revolution is embodied in the immense collection of Trumbull's public and private letters. His calm and lofty self-possession, fed from a source which earthly dangers and disasters could not agitate or perturb, was the stay and solace of many a despondent colleague. He faced his colossal toil cheerfully and hopefully, in the belief that he held a commission from an all-wise and all-powerful Master, and that an account of his labours must be duly rendered in a higher quarter than the Board of War at Philadelphia. "We have this year seen the wonderful ways, and marvellous works, of the Lord. When we are doing our duty, and using such means as He hath put in our power, we may then stand still, and hope to see our salvation."<sup>1</sup> That was Trumbull's creed; and that

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Jonathan Trumbull of February 26, 1776. *The Massachusetts Historical Collections*; Series VII., Volume 2.

was his constant practice. His friendship and co-operation were very helpful to Washington, who derived much satisfaction from the substance of his letters, which were always to the point; and who found no fault with their sincere and impressive, if somewhat archaic, style.<sup>1</sup> The civilian, when writing to the soldier, did not obtrude his opinion on questions of military tactics; but he displayed a remarkable appreciation of military exigencies, and he was unequalled in his mastery over the art of supplying the urgent and manifold demands of war. In August 1776, when New York was threatened, and Washington despatched to Connecticut a pressing request for reinforcements, the Governor replied that he had already ordered out fourteen regiments of substantial farmers, whose business could ill spare them in harvest-time, but whom the General was at liberty to retain till the immediate peril was over. "I cannot," returned Washington, "sufficiently express my thanks for your strenuous exertions, and prudent forecast in ordering matters so that your force has generally been collected and put in motion as soon as it is demanded." During the last six years of the war,—when the country everywhere was growing very weary, and the martial spirit had perceptibly slackened in some leading States,—the Continental army continued to draw an annual average of four thousand three hundred recruits from the townships of Connecticut. Intense as were Trumbull's political convictions, through all that cruel and angry period he ruled like a patriot rather than a partisan; and, mindful of peace in the midst of war, he was at pains to prepare his fellow-

<sup>1</sup> "The honorable Congress has, with one united voice, appointed you to the high station you possess. The Supreme Director of all events has caused a wonderful union of hearts and counsels to subsist amongst us. Now, therefore, be strong and very courageous. May the God of the armies of Israel shower down the blessing of His divine providence on you, give you wisdom and fortitude, and cover your head in the day of battle!" Those were the terms in which Trumbull congratulated Washington on his nomination as Commander-in-Chief; and Washington responded in a similar vein.



citizens for the duties and responsibilities, which awaited them in a happier future, by directing their footsteps into the paths of antique prudence, frugality, and probity. Monsieur Guizot once asked James Russell Lowell how long, in his anticipation, the American republic was likely to endure. "So long," was the answer, "as the ideas of its founders continue to be dominant:" and Lowell went on to explain that, by their ideas, he meant also the traditions of their race in government and morals. Those ideas and traditions are nowhere more vividly and instructively exemplified than in the actions and writings, the life and the character, of Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut.

George Washington, and Jonathan Trumbull, live in the memory of their compatriots as chief and leader of heroic proportions and stainless reputation; but a different fate has overtaken another set of Revolutionary celebrities who never were lukewarm, and never idle,—and who accomplished, if not the best, at all events the most, of which they were capable. The politicians who sat in Congress during the war got small commendation in their own lifetime, and, (for the most part,) less than no thanks from History. It was not to be expected that the members of an assembly which issued the Declaration of Independence should enjoy the gratitude and esteem of those among their contemporaries who favoured the British connection. The view held in the Royal army with reference to the American delegates at Philadelphia was fairly summed up by an officer who called them "a pack of scamps";<sup>1</sup> while civilian writers on the Tory side represented them as upstarts and nobodies who had ousted their natural superiors from the government of an unhappy country. Sarcasm and censure, coming from that quarter, are read without surprise; but it must likewise be admitted that very

<sup>1</sup> Military letter of Feb. 1779; quoted in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* for July 1898.

little ink has been expended in praise or defence of Congress by certain American authors whose testimonials to Whig merit are in most cases extravagant in eulogy, and emotional to the verge of bombast. More than one historian in whose eyes Washington was a demigod and every Revolutionary colonel a theme for Plutarch, has very few complimentary epithets to bestow upon the Congressmen. Virtue, — such virtue as they had, whether much or scanty, — was in their case her own reward. But they were tough fellows who loved their work ; who cared little what hard words it earned them even when they were still alive to hear ; and who had no leisure to feel uneasy about the figure they would present to posterity. If posterity has been unfair to them, it cannot be denied that, in one important respect, they brought their fate upon themselves. Tradition and literature in the United States have judged the men of the past favourably, or harshly, according as their attitude towards Washington was friendly, or the reverse ; and there were long periods when many Congressmen spent all the time which they could spare from their executive duties in intriguing against their own Commander-in-Chief. That is a circumstance which American patriots can never forget, nor easily bring themselves to pardon. The balance of posthumous justice has inclined unduly against the Congressmen as a class ; but, even so, there is a certain satisfaction in noting that, once at least in the course of the world, some people have been properly, although perhaps excessively, punished for declining to recognise and welcome a great man when they were fortunate enough to possess one.

When a later generation sits in judgment upon any famous combination of individuals who exercised authority during a great crisis in the past, — whether it be the Roman Senate, or the States-General of Holland in the contest against Philip the Second, or the Spanish Cortes during Napoleon's invasion of the Peninsula, — there is a natural tendency to leave out of view the successful results which were brought about by their

energy and zeal, and to devote an altogether disproportionate attention to their mistakes, their imperfections, and their failures. Scandals and confusions are never absent where executive business is carried on, not by the silent written injunctions of a responsible minister, but in hot debate, and by open vote. A general or an administrator, who keeps his own counsel and who knows his own mind, may effectually conceal from public observation all the less admirable qualities of intellect and temper which are inevitably and unpleasantly conspicuous in the transactions of a popular assembly; and those defects were plentiful and prominent in the American Congress.

Samuel Adams was the most powerful of all Congressmen. He had aroused Massachusetts, — and, through Massachusetts, every other of the thirteen colonies, — into rebellion against the Crown; but in his own case the spirit of opposition, and the passion for independence, did not limit themselves to a quarrel with George the Third and George the Third's ministers. Samuel Adams, from boyhood to old age, was aglow with inextinguishable ambition; but he was ambitious for an idea. His political Utopia consisted in government by a representative assembly which should not delegate executive authority to anyone outside its walls, but should conduct even the smallest details of administration through the direct personal agency of its own members. That was the day-dream of his youth, which during seven years of his later manhood he converted into a living reality. To enforce that view he had long ago used, with extraordinary dexterity, the New England institution of the Town-meeting. He disseminated his doctrines far and wide in the congenial soil of the Northern colonies, where he persuaded the electors to fill the Provincial Assemblies with men who belonged to his own school of politics. The ablest of these associates accompanied him into Congress; and he was there surrounded by allies and disciples sworn to discourage the appointment of official placemen, and to

check the growth of any non-elective civilian or military hierarchy within the Republic, quite as jealously and watchfully as they resisted the encroachments of the British Parliament and the Royal Prerogative from without.<sup>1</sup>

\* Congress, at the beginning of its career, discharged honestly those high duties which it had fearlessly assumed. In a representative body, which keeps too much public business in its hands, public money is apt to stick to the fingers of the less respectable members; but, during the earlier years of the Revolution, speculation and embezzlement were not safe and easy trades in an atmosphere impregnated by the austere influence of Samuel Adams. Primitive in the strictness and plainness of his life, and so indifferent to gain that he incurred reproach among his fellow-townsmen as a bad provider for his family, he was incorruptible himself, and a terror to those who in the matter of corruption would gladly have been evil-doers. From the first there was some tendency among the delegates at Philadelphia towards the system of mutual good offices which, in the less stately nomenclature of modern politics, is called log-rolling; but that tendency prevailed as between State and State, and not as between man and man.<sup>2</sup> It may be fairly claimed that Congress, in its earlier sessions, would not suffer by a comparison, on the score of purity, with some very reputable and

<sup>1</sup> *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Edited Under Direction of Congress by Francis Wharton.* The account of Samuel Adams in Wharton's Introduction is an admirable specimen of condensed political biography.

<sup>2</sup> Washington complained that, in consequence of the intimate understanding which existed among the Eastern States, high appointments in the army went almost exclusively to New Englanders; and John Adams regretted that Congress had voted the purchase in Philadelphia of clothing for the troops, which might probably have been got cheaper in New York. He spoke with disapprobation of the private friendships and enmities, the provincial views and partialities, which intermingled in the consultations. "These," he said, "are degrees of corruption. They are deviations from the public interest and from rectitude."

self-satisfied Parliaments in less disturbed times, and in older countries.

In later stages of the war the obstinate determination of Congressmen to monopolise the functions of administration was productive of inconveniences and misadventures. The arrangement at last broke down, and was reformed in some important particulars; but it was not ill adapted to the unforeseen and unprecedented situation of the country during that period which immediately followed upon the outbreak of hostilities. For, in the first place, a dominant and potent central assembly afforded the rallying-point for a number of separate communities, unaccustomed to work together in common, and strongly affected by local prejudices and aims. Through the instrumentality of Congress, (as has been well remarked,) the States were kept in touch with one another in a manner that had never before been possible; and men learned to recognise broader interests than those which were bounded by narrow State lines. And again, when all has been said for and against, the fact remains that Congress, in the spring of 1775, had no choice but to assume full and instant responsibility for the entire public administration. The war swooped down, like a thunder-cloud in summer, upon a society unequipped and unorganised, — with no army, no fleet, no accepted methods of national action, and no machinery of national finance. An enormous and multifarious mass of work had to be undertaken at once, and pushed forward at desperate speed. The most capable men in America found themselves gathered together on the spot, with a large supply of energy to spare over and above that which was required for the purposes of legislation. Each great Department was entrusted to a Committee numbering from four to ten members; who, at the beginning, were taken from the flower of the Assembly. The most industrious and celebrated of these bodies were known as the Board of War and Ordnance; the Board of Treasury; the Committee of



the Navy; and the Committee of Secret Correspondence, which ultimately was developed into the Committee of Foreign Affairs. Congress governed by means of processes very similar to those adopted by our own Long Parliament, and by the National Assembly of France in the agony of civil dissension and foreign war which in the Spring of 1792 convulsed and assailed that country. Such processes, unconstitutional in theory, but passably effective in practice, carried the American Republic safe through her first and most serious perils, and have procured for their authors an occasional tribute of sincere, though carefully measured, gratitude. "The memory of the Continental Congress," (so writes a discerning historian,) "is bound up with that portion of our national history which we contemplate with peculiar pride; with the sacrifices and the sufferings, more cruel than the grave, of the eight years of war; with the poverty, and the struggles, of the six years of peace that preceded the organisation of the Federal Government. The republics which the Long Parliament and the National Assembly set up have long since disappeared from the face of the earth. The republic which the Continental Congress set up still endures."<sup>1</sup>

Congress had taken an immense burden on to shoulders which were none too broad; for it bore yet another resemblance to the Long Parliament, and the French Convention, in the circumstance that it became a smaller and smaller body as time went on. In this case, however, the diminution arose from less sinister causes. The ranks of the American Assembly were not depleted by the guillotine, or by such drastic operations as Pride's Purge. The need of administrative ability, and patriotic devotion, was so imperative in so many quarters that men of force and talent were freely withdrawn from senatorial duties in order to serve their country elsewhere, and in other capacities. Before the close of 1776 Benjamin Franklin had sailed for France as Commissioner at the Court of King Louis.

<sup>1</sup> *Paper on the Continental Congress*, by Herbert Friedenwald.



Eminent Congressmen, all the American Continent over, were governing provinces, leading troops in battle, or fulfilling special missions of great moment and protracted duration. Some delegates remained at their distant homes from want of sympathy with the Revolution, and others because they were fairly bewildered and frightened by the portentous labours which awaited them in Philadelphia. After the first eighteen months of war the numbers present on the benches never rose above five and thirty, and sometimes fell as low as twenty-three. There were, moreover, not a few Congressmen who, — while they were glad enough, on a pretext of public duty, to take up their temporary residence in the most luxurious of American cities, — had discovered that Philadelphia contained more agreeable resorts than the hall at the East end of her State-house. Northern members alleged that some delegates from beyond the Potomac, “immersed in the pursuit of pleasure,” insisted that Congress should not meet till nine in the morning, never came near the place till eleven, and then consumed what was left of the sitting by an exhibition of that facile Southern eloquence which already began to pall upon colleagues who hailed from colder and sterner latitudes.<sup>1</sup> The evil was incapable of cure; inasmuch as the Chair had no authority to compel attendance, and private remonstrances against idleness and loquacity had to be very cautiously worded when addressed to a high-mettled gentleman from Georgia or Virginia. And so it came about that an inordinate share of drudgery was imposed upon a scanty band of members who manned all the Committees, and very seldom missed an hour of the proceedings in Congress. “This service,” (one of them wrote,) “is too severe. I have had the weight of North Carolina on my shoulders within a day or two of three months. I have sat some days from six in the morning till five, and sometimes six, of an afternoon; and often without eating and drinking.” “The papers,” (so

<sup>1</sup> Titus Hosmer to Jonathan Trumbull; Philadelphia, Aug. 31, 1778.

another letter ran,) "will inform you that I have been thrust into Congress. I find there is a great deal of difference between sporting a sentiment on politics over a glass of wine, and discharging the duty of a senator."<sup>1</sup>

The work of Congress was supplemented by the independent exertions of minor senates, planted down at intervals throughout the extensive area which the rebellion covered. Each State possessed its Assembly; and every Assembly acted not only as a Legislative body, but as a local Committee of Public Safety for promoting the cause of the Revolution. The Tories had circulated letters, which purported to emanate from Lord Howe, exhorting voters "to send only King's friends" to the Assemblies; but the author of that appeal, whether he was Lord Howe or another, proved to be no match at electioneering for Samuel Adams and his emissaries. Almost all the representatives who were chosen, and all who ventured to put in an appearance and take part in the deliberations, were staunch opponents of the King's Government. Whether their work lay in Congress, or at the capitals of their respective States, the public men of America had their fill of business. Hurrying from the Committee-room to the Council-chamber, and back again to their Committee when the debate was over; chafing under dull, and still more impatiently under flowery, speeches; sitting through the summer when Philadelphia was made all but intolerable by "the excessive heat of the sun reflected from the buildings and the pavements;" or sitting through the winter at Fishkill, by the Hudson River, in a place of meeting so damp and cold that the New York Convention was fain to beg the iron stove from the Presbyterian Church at Albany;—such was their course of existence from year's end to year's end, and a hard life they found it. With no opportunity to earn a livelihood for the support of their absent families, they were unable to remit home a single dollar out of the wretched salaries on which they lodged and fed them-

<sup>1</sup> *American Archives* for July 1776.

selves with ever-increasing difficulty as articles of consumption became scarcer, and paper money more disastrously abundant.<sup>1</sup> But their patriotism never flagged. They laboured fiercely, and they achieved much, though not always by the most judicious means, or exactly in the right direction. The States were often at cross-purposes with Congress, and not unfrequently took steps which caused embarrassment at the headquarters of the army. Washington had occasion to remonstrate with the New York Convention for having confiscated for the use of their regiments, twenty-six bales of clothing which were in course of transport to his camp at Morristown; General Greene reported that certain local authorities, along the New England coast, encouraged the sea-service to the detriment of military recruiting, and that "the success of privateering had set all the troops distracted;" and officers who superintended the re-enlistments for the new army encountered technical difficulties of a very serious nature from the lavishness displayed by various provincial governments in the matter of bounties. The New England States agreed among themselves to add fifteen dollars to the sum of twenty dollars which Congress had voted; and Massachusetts, thinking nothing too good for a cultivator who would leave his farm to defend his country, offered double that increased amount of money to the rank and file in her own battalions. But the diffused energy which permeated the Confederacy, — during that season of preparation for an arduous, and probably a decisive, campaign, — seldom failed, even when misdirected, to produce some material effect in some important quarter. The flannels and woollens, on

<sup>1</sup> As early in the Revolution as December 1776, at the time when Congress had taken refuge at Baltimore, a Rhode Island delegate wrote home that he was obliged to pay six dollars a week for his board. "Every article of living," he said, "has been doubled within a year or two. I ask no more from the State than to give me a decent support while I am in its service." A Congressman at Philadelphia described himself as unable to spare a single day, in the course of nine months, "for a little excursion into the country" to visit his family.

which the New York Convention had laid hands, kept the cold from one set of Republican soldiers, instead of from another; the liberal bounties voted by Massachusetts enabled husbands and fathers to feel that the children would have enough to eat while they themselves were on the march to Saratoga; and, though the mariners of Salem and Providence might have done good service in Washington's ranks, they were more useful still on board the cruisers which kept the war going by their captures of military stores, and of mercantile cargoes that were sold for the relief of what otherwise would, from time to time, have been an empty Treasury.

Never before had so minute a number of men, so little trained to public affairs, been confronted by such a multitude of formidable operations which had all to be taken in hand simultaneously under dire penalties. The Congressmen of 1776 and 1777 handled some matters very badly; but they faced difficulties and dangers, as fast as they arose, with business-like promptitude; and they attacked one question of high administration after another, and sometimes ten of a morning, with hearty zest and unfailing self-confidence. In the course of nineteen months they framed and promulgated four successive army-systems; each of which, in spite of grave defects, had at least this merit about it, that it produced some sort of army. They were entirely unacquainted with the royal courts of Europe, and had no personal relations with any European statesman; they were served abroad by envoys some of whom spoke no language except English, or so much as understood the meaning of the word "Protocol;" and yet they pushed their advances in every quarter, and were deterred by no rebuff. They were vigilant in their dealings with the Indians both beyond and within the frontier; punishing murderous inroads with exemplary, if sometimes tardy, severity; and conciliating the friendly and neutral tribes by the careful observance of ceremonies and customs which were much more familiar to their own experience than the etiquette of an Austrian or a Spanish palace.

The officer whom they selected as their representative at an Indian interview was invariably conversant with the stately formalities, and the figurative language of solemn compliment, which the occasion demanded; and, when the conference was satisfactorily concluded, he could play the host, without any outward signs of repugnance, at the head of an overloaded table.<sup>1</sup> They managed, and mismanaged, the Republican finances; apportioning taxation between the States; voting enormous supplies of money, if that word could be applied to the Continental paper; and negotiating loans of very much more restricted amounts, but indefinitely greater purchasing power, at Paris, at Amsterdam, and, — by the exercise of almost superhuman importunity and pertinacity, — even at Madrid. When the value of the government notes began to fall, (which occurred almost as soon as the ink upon them was dry,) Congress, in its ignorant optimism, believed itself to have discovered a remedy in the fixing of a tariff for commodities. Salt was to be sold at eight shillings a bushel, and Bohea tea at three shillings a pound; and tradesmen were warned that, if they asked more for their goods than the regulation prices, or if they insisted on being paid in silver dollars, “they might depend upon being held up as enemies to their country, without respect of persons.”

<sup>1</sup> Major Henry Livingston, of the Third New York Continental Line, gives a curious account of a meeting with the Chiefs of the Caghawaga nation, which had lately been approached by Governor Carleton of Canada with an offer of the English alliance. “In compliance with their custom,” (the Major writes,) “I opened my business in a set formal speech, which was interpreted by a one-eyed Chief who understood English very well; and they answered me with all that deliberation, firmness, and seriousness peculiar to the Indians. All this was done before dinner; and it was well it happened so; for after drinking eighteen bottles of Claret I question whether they would have talked as rationally as they did. I took especial care that each one had a full plate continually. Soup, beef, turkey, beans, potatoes; — no matter how heterogeneous the mixture, it all went down. They seemed highly pleased, and told me that Mr. Carleton had often sent them belts, and made speeches to them, but had never dined with them.” Mention is made elsewhere of two quarts of molasses being provided for the Indians between their meals.



Whenever the delegates at Philadelphia could snatch half a day, or even half an hour, from the imperious demands of current business, they reverted, with an interest which never languished, to the discussion and settlement of the Articles of Confederation. That gigantic task occupied the spare moments of Congress for nearly six years from the middle of 1775 onwards; for it was nothing less than the construction, in all its parts, of a national constitution which, according to the expectation of its artificers, was to last during all time, and to overspread the whole of the North American Continent. Some schemes, very dear to the heart of Congressmen, in the end miscarried; and much of their work was slipshod, but their rhetoric never. The loftiest sentiments, on every conceivable opportunity, were set forth to the world in impassioned phrases. A fragment of vigorous declamation against the greed of the German princes, and a really fine appeal to the natural feelings of the German people, formed the Preamble to a Resolution under which fifty acres of land were granted to any private soldier who deserted from a foreign regiment in British pay. The execution of this project was committed to Benjamin Franklin, who speedily had the eloquence of Congress translated into very plain and intelligible German, and printed inside the covers of parcels of tobacco, made up in imitation of those which were sold across the counter of a rural store. Franklin contrived that a number of these packets should fall into the hands of General Von Heister's foragers; and the event showed that many a Hessian grenadier, as he ruminated over his pipe, had dwelt lovingly on the tempting offer which he found within the wrappers.

From January to June of the year 1777 men were mustering and drilling in every township throughout the States; but their increasing numbers brought into startling evidence the destitution of the Confederacy in most of the indispensable necessities of war. Before hostilities commenced, the militia companies of some

Colonies kept in store about as much ammunition as was required for firing salutes on the King's birthday ; and a year of sharp fighting had reduced the whole country to one and the same low level of military penury. In the summer of 1776 the New York Convention was informed that there remained only twenty hundred-weight of gunpowder in Albany County, and that Tryon County was still worse provided. The magazines in Virginia contained less than two tons of lead and ball ; and the Cherokees were on the war-path all along the frontier. Meanwhile the Revolutionary government owned no powder-mills, and no shot-furnaces or public laboratories ; and they had at their disposal a very miserable supply of the raw material which was essential for the purposes of warlike manufacture. But their young country swarmed with ingenious and enterprising men, accustomed, in every department of life, to produce tolerably adequate results from rude and scanty means ; — of whom some were ardent patriots, and others eager for gain ; while the larger number, without pretence at concealment, were actuated by a combination of those two very powerful motives. Inventors and projectors were sure of obtaining a respectful and intelligent hearing from the Secret Committee of Congress, and from the Pennsylvanian Committee of Safety ; both of which bodies entered upon their work under the guidance of Benjamin Franklin, — that master in the science of applying the study of natural philosophy to everyday uses. Outside Philadelphia, however, the authorities had still something to learn in practical chemistry. The Massachusetts Assembly had agreed to buy up all the saltpetre within their borders at a stated, and unduly handsome, price ; when "a simple country-man" brought them a specimen of his own domestic manufacture, and promised that more could be made in eight months than the province had money to pay for. This native genius explained that the accumulation of earth and refuse beneath an old barn, or disused dwelling or out-house, was a mine of nitre for all who



knew how to work up the material by a short and cheap method of treatment. These facts were already no secret to the Pennsylvanian Committee, who, when the war broke out, had summoned two competent persons from each county throughout the State, taught them the process, and sent them home to instruct their neighbours. The administrators of every Northern colony, before very long, had offers of more saltpetre than they cared to purchase;<sup>1</sup> and further South,—most fortunately for a population which was not industrial, and exceedingly bellicose,—the precious substance already existed in the natural state. Beyond the Potomac, (so it was officially reported,) there were “caverns of Saltpetre, which had hitherto been wasted by salting meat.” People were soon making dams, and building races, on the smaller rivers; or converting the flour-mills into powder-mills wherever the demand was exceptionally urgent.<sup>2</sup> Close attention was given to the quality, as well as the quantity, of the finished product; and in Connecticut, particularly, manufacturers whose powder carried short were recalled to good behaviour by the very serious threat that their delinquencies would be brought to the notice of Governor Trumbull.

Lead was yet more scarce than powder, and could be procured only at heavy cost, and by painful sacrifices. The citizens of Philadelphia, in July 1776, “spared the weights from their windows to be run into ball;” and the Pennsylvanian Committee of Safety,—in full sympathy with a methodical and punctual community which could ill dispense with knowing the time of day,—ordered the construction of moulds for the casting of clock-weights in iron, to be

<sup>1</sup> “I was somewhat non-plussed to find that I was appointed, with yourself, a Committee for purchasing Saltpetre manufactured within this Colony. People are bringing saltpetre to me, and expect to be paid in cash. I have bought fifty hundred-weight of one man, who made fourteen pounds of it out of three bushels of earth.” That was written by a citizen of Goshen, in the State of New York.

<sup>2</sup> “Proposals of Elisha Tyson, in Baltimore County, Maryland, eighteen miles from Baltimore Town, and three from Joppa.” *American Archives*.

exchanged with the inhabitants as substitutes for their clock-weights of lead. Next went the water-spouts, the ornaments on house-fronts, and the angels' heads and heraldic shields at the top of the rain-pipes of the more important family-mansions. All these objects were honestly bought and paid for; but in less scrupulous cities lead was taken without compensation, and by a more summary procedure. The Sons of Liberty in New York confiscated Tory cisterns, and stripped Tory roofs; and melted into bullets King George's equestrian effigy, together with the founts of type which Mr. James Rivington, as editor and owner of the "Gazette," had so often used in defense of King George's policy. As the war progressed, lead mines were discovered and worked in American soil; and a brisk traffic in the metal was carried on with England at the expense of what, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was among the most beautiful of English arts. Dealers bought up, for surreptitious exportation to the rebellious colonies, the graceful, soft-featured leaden figures which then, in great profusion, decorated the garden-terraces and the courtyards of our country-houses. The primitive and elementary character of the difficulties with which the managers of the American Revolution were condemned to grapple is curiously illustrated by the dearth of so ordinary an article as the paper required for the manufacture of their cartridges. An edition of the German Bible, unbound and in sheets, which formed part of the stock in trade of a Loyalist printer in the suburbs of Philadelphia, found its way into the cartouche-boxes of Washington's infantry. There were parishes in which, when a hostile incursion was supposed to be imminent, the leaves of vestry-books, and other Church-records, were used by the minute-men in the preparation of their ammunition; and local traditions of Bibles and hymn-books being torn up for wadding are as generally prevalent throughout the States as the belief that Oliver Cromwell's troopers littered their horses in the

aisle of the Cathedral is common in ancient English cities. Requisitions for quires of paper, and pounds of thread, poured in upon the Board of War from the fighting armies, and were sometimes worded in terms of passionate entreaty. America, (said Edmund Burke,) loyal and docile in the hand of wise English ministers, had formerly been governed "by paper and a little pack-thread." Downing Street, in an evil hour, changed the policy of Sir Robert Walpole and Mr. Secretary Pitt, for more arbitrary theories of colonial administration; and paper and pack-thread were now put to other, and less pacific, uses.

The practical American intellect fixed itself tenaciously on every point of prime consequence, however humble and inglorious that point might appear in the eyes of an administrator of the Old World, and of the old school. Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century the mechanism of fire-arms continuously exercised the scientific faculties of all the leading nations; but in the eighteenth century the efficiency of the musket depended mainly on the quality of the flint. That commodity, at any rate, was of home-growth in the colonies; and there was no limit to the trouble which Congressmen took in order to secure for their troops the very best that ingenuity could discover. The correspondence on this subject was for some months considerable in bulk; and information and advice arrived in Philadelphia from many parts of the Confederacy. In every district there were sportsmen who went out shooting in all weathers; who held a decided opinion on the means of preventing missfires, and of securing an instantaneous ignition of the charge; and who were not in the least afraid of telling their mind freely to those men of their own class, and within the circle of their own acquaintance, who for the time being were governors of the country. Letters passed to and fro, discussing the comparative merits of the red flint, "far exceeding anything imported from Europe;" the green flint, which was "harder than the common

sort, and would fire oftener without sharpening ;” and the yellow flint, wherewith, in pre-colonial days, the aboriginal inhabitants had been wont to head their arrows. Congress finally decided on the black flint, usually found with lime-stone, “a prodigious fine vein” of which was soon reported to exist in the neighbourhood of Ticonderoga. Thirty thousand specimens were despatched to Washington’s camp ; and the Republican generals exerted infinite watchfulness, and some severity, to ensure that the private soldiers did not misuse the excellent article with which they had been so providently furnished. The forethought and diligence of the Revolutionary statesmen were justified by the result ; as their most observant adversaries, in all ranks of the British army, emphatically acknowledged. A very able and gallant fieldofficer of an English line regiment put on record his bitter regret that the valour of his soldiers was so often “rendered vain by the badness of a pebble-stone.” He indignantly exclaimed against a War Office which neglected to fit the musket of battle with the black flint which a country gentleman in England carried in the hammer of his fowling-piece, and related how he had overheard British privates saying among themselves that a Yankee flint was as good as a glass of grog.<sup>1</sup>

When all that native effort could accomplish had been done for the equipment of the Continental regiments, one want remained unsatisfied which Congress was

<sup>1</sup> *A Military Miscellany*, by the Hon. Colonel Colin Lindsay of the 46th Regiment: London, 1796. In a note to the passage quoted Colonel Lindsay says: “It is now thirteen years since this was written, yet the flints are as bad as ever.”

Much that is interesting on this head is given in the fourth Chapter of *The Private Soldier under Washington*, by Charles Knowles Bolton ; New York, 1902. A good American flint was supposed to fire sixty rounds without needing to be re-sharpened ; which, according to Colonel Lindsay, was just ten times the amount of service that could with any confidence be expected from those used in European armies. It is worth remarking that Colonel Hawker, in his celebrated and fascinating treatise on Guns and Shooting, pronounces in favour of “the most transparent of the common black stones.”

powerless to meet. In the summer of 1776 every resource was exhausted in order to arm the host which Washington had gathered round him at New York; and the whole Confederacy was ransacked for guns, amidst pitiful remonstrances from people who were fondly attached to their weapons, and who in many cases lived, exposed and defenceless, in daily and nightly apprehension of an Indian onslaught.<sup>1</sup> The country had been swept bare of muskets for the benefit of the army; and most of those muskets entirely disappeared in the course of the six months of disastrous warfare which commenced with the defeat on Long Island. Many of the guns were hand-made, on varying patterns, by the village blacksmiths; and, when any of them happened to be damaged on the march or in action, there was nothing in store wherewith to replace the parts which had been lost or broken.<sup>2</sup> Several thousands of the best firelocks were captured by the British at Fort Washington; and each of the militiamen, who left for their homes in crowds after the hard weather had once set in, carried off his musket with him, for no better reason than because he was loth to part with it. "Nothing," wrote Washington in February 1777, "distresses me more than the universal call that is upon me, from all quarters, for fire-arms which I am totally unable to supply. The scandalous loss, waste, and private appropriation, of public arms during the last campaign are beyond all conception." The provincial assemblies set their local tradesmen to work on the production of an article "as

<sup>1</sup> Congress, all through July 1776, was bombarded with complaints from the districts which had been stripped of their arms and ammunition. "We have no suitable guns," said a North Carolinian, "for the defence of our wives and our little ones, as we were obliged to furnish the army with our best arms." "We could supply all Europe with gun-flints;" (so a citizen of New Jersey wrote); "but we want none of the flints here. You may have them all; for we have no powder, which gives great uneasiness to our people, as we expect an Indian war if our forces fail to the Northward. I pray you would order us some powder, if it were but a quarter of a pound each man. Now we have nothing but our sticks and axes."

<sup>2</sup> *The Private Soldier under Washington*; Chapter IV.



near as could be had in imitation of the arms called King's muskets;" but the manufacturing capabilities of America were limited, and contracts could seldom be given out for more than a hundred weapons at a time. Such fire-arms as might be bought in Europe were of very poor quality. A customer, who is known to be in difficulties, cannot hope to be served with the pick of the market; and the Committee of War at Philadelphia was specifically cautioned "not to trust to the ordinary muskets of commerce, which were almost as dangerous to friends as to enemies." <sup>1</sup>

Weeks rolled on; the weather mended; the roads hardened, and Washington was in hourly expectation of hearing that Sir William Howe had begun to advance along them; and yet the American infantry was still only half-armed with inferior weapons. But meanwhile Silas Deane had been busy in Paris; and his plan of operations was settled, and pursued, in concert with Caron de Beaumarchais, the most knowing and dexterous of living Parisians. Certain armourers in the great French cities were allowed to purchase from the Royal Arsenal thirty thousand muskets of the model of 1763, at twenty-three francs apiece; and Louis the Sixteenth's ministers were perfectly well aware that these favoured tradesmen did not buy the goods in order to dress their shop-fronts. The whole consignment was after a while on the high seas, packed beneath the hatches of three merchantmen. One of their number was accounted for by the British cruisers; but, in the course of March 1777, a vessel sailed into the mouth of the Delaware with eleven thousand stand of arms on board; and another, (which rumour had reported as lost,) unloaded "a cargo of about twelve thousand fusees, and one thousand barrels of powder," at Portsmouth in New Hampshire. A share of the muskets was straightway allotted to

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Franklin from Paris; June 10, 1776. *American Archives*. General Heath told Washington that some of the muskets purchased by Massachusetts were scandalously bad. "Colonel Crafts," (he wrote,) "informs me that of thirty-three which he proved, sixteen burst. I suppose them to have been made for the Guinea Trade."

every State in proportion to the number of battalions which it contributed to the national army; and Washington expressed himself as "put out of all further uneasiness" with respect to as grave a cause for anxiety as ever vexed a general.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Governor Cooke of Rhode Island; Morristown, April 3, 1777.

The foregoing account of the labours undertaken by Congress, and the Provincial Assemblies, is based on materials gathered from very many sources; but the principal authority is the collection entitled *The American Archives, Prepared and Published under an Act of Congress*. Those vast volumes include thousands of letters written in racy and unvarnished style, and often by poorly educated men. The governments of France and Germany testify to their pride in a Frederic or a Napoleon by the minute official care with which the public correspondence of those great military leaders and administrators has been preserved, arranged, and elucidated. America, on her part, when engaged in the compilation of her records, has given grateful recognition to the fact that the energy, the homely ability, and the quiet patient courage, of countless obscure citizens supplied the living force which carried her struggle for national existence to a successful issue.

1777



## CHAPTER II

### THE FOREIGN OFFICERS. THE LOYALISTS. WASHINGTON AT MORRISTOWN. MIDDLEBROOK

THE military market in America had for some time past been flooded with French exports of much more questionable value than regulation muskets of a recent pattern. Ever since July 1776 Silas Deane of Connecticut was established at Paris as the business agent of the Revolutionary government. Deane had begun life "in the usual New England way by keeping school;" he subsequently practised law, and made money by trade; and he had sat in Congress long enough to be only too intimately acquainted with the interior springs which moved the machine of administration at Philadelphia. He was a man of striking manners and good appearance, accustomed to live generously and to entertain in a liberal style, and much addicted to showy equipages and appointments; but he could not write French at all, nor speak it with any fluency.<sup>1</sup> Devoid of that all-essential accomplishment, and endowed with those perilous social ambitions and personal tastes, when left to himself in a foreign capital he was the appointed prey of the charlatan and the intriguer. He was a judge of firearms, and Beaumarchais was always at hand to help him in procuring them; but, when it came to testing and selecting men, his new French friend was a most unsafe guide. Deane was open to flattery, and too fond of the dinners and suppers without which business then was seldom transacted in Paris;<sup>2</sup> and he was totally incapable, by his

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *Introduction to the Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*; Chapter XIII.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Duke of Richmond to Edmund Burke, Esq.; Paris, Aug. 26, 1776.

own unassisted observation, of noting the signs which distinguish an adventurer from a man of honour.

Deane was soon surrounded by speculators and inventors, and by soldiers of fortune whose rapacity was shameless, and whose martial pretensions affected officers of merit and experience with a feeling nothing short of nausea. A famous chemist, encumbered with a wife and four children, and loaded with clamorous debts, who would not engage himself to pass over into the New World until he had twenty thousand French crowns to clear his property, and secure the future of his family; a person of title, formerly employed in the Royal Manufactory of Arms, and now involved in a troublesome lawsuit, who "had formed a plan for forcing a passage through the cruisers of the English marine, if the Colonies would advance him two or three millions of francs for such a decisive object;" and two Irish officers, of whom one had enjoyed unusual credit and influence as aide-de-camp to a Marshal of France, and the other, (a counterpart, apparently, in everything except his nationality, of Robert Clive,) had beaten the English in India while only a captain, — these were specimens of the motley crew who presented themselves to the notice of the American government as gentlemen of the first rank and eminence in their respective countries. The most prominent among them was a Monsieur Ducoudray, the son of a wine-merchant in Brittany, who had served, not very high up, as an officer in the French artillery, but who appeared at Philadelphia in the character of a Brigadier General, and a noble of ancient birth.<sup>1</sup> He was armed with an agreement, dictated by himself, and signed by Silas

<sup>1</sup> Memoir of September 12, 1777, in the Appendix to the Fifth Chapter of the Third Volume of Henri Doniol's *Diplomatic Correspondence*. This Memoir was composed by a French officer, one of Lafayette's companions, who never spells Ducoudray in the same way twice running; as was natural in the case of a name not familiar to genuine members of the French nobility. Washington, who had occasion to write that name much more often than was agreeable to him, spells it as given in the text; and his version may be allowed to pass muster.

Deane under the advice of Beaumarchais, in virtue of which he claimed the rank of Major General in the American army, and Commander-in-Chief of the Artillery and Engineers; with a staff consisting of an Adjutant, two aides-de-camp, and a secretary and designer; thirty-six thousand francs a year of pay and allowances; and, when the war ended, a gratuity of three hundred thousand francs, or a pension for life of half his emoluments. Ducoudray further announced that he would soon be followed across the sea by a hundred of his old brother-officers. A first instalment had already arrived in the persons of six captains and twelve lieutenants, with brevet commissions from the French government carrying a date which gave them seniority over every native American of their own rank throughout the entire Continental army.

John Adams spoke in grave disapprobation of "Mr. Deane's mad contract with Monsieur du Coudray and his hundred officers."<sup>1</sup> These gentlemen, and their fellows, belonged to a species very easily recognised by students of the old Roman, and the Elisabethan, comedies. Pyrgopolinices and Thraso, Bobadil and Parolles, might be seen, on any fine afternoon of May or June 1777, swaggering up and down Chestnut Street and Market Street in dingy white uniforms, amidst the growing aversion and indignation of Philadelphia. Almost all of them were loaded with debt; and some had left their own army in disgrace. The worst came from the French colonies; bearing letters of recommendation in which they were introduced as officers with unblemished reputations and splendid careers; "brave as their swords; in short, as mere Cæsars, each of whom was an invaluable acquisition to America."<sup>2</sup> Those letters

<sup>1</sup> Diary of John Adams for April 1778.

<sup>2</sup> That is how Franklin described the style of these military testimonials. The Memoir by a French officer of September 12 is very outspoken about the characters of French applicants for commissions in the American army, and exceedingly severe upon those who recommended them for employment.

were signed by the Governors of Martinique and Guadeloupe with a sense of profound relief and satisfaction; but their perusal evoked very different sentiments in the breast of Washington. He already had suffered much from the class of foreign officers who impose themselves upon the credulity and inexperience of a nation of civilians during the first few months of an unexpected war. An American court-martial had recently cashiered a certain Major Zedwitz who, (by his own account,) fought under Frederic of Prussia in the Seven Years' War, dined for five consecutive months at Lord Granby's table, and was warmly urged by that nobleman to accept a commission in the British Army. But, all the same, while he was drawing pay from Congress, he wrote letters in abominable English to Governor Tryon and General Howe, asking them for two thousand pounds in order to buy them information about the strength of Washington's regiments;<sup>1</sup> and Washington's followers remembered the incident with displeasure and disgust. The aspect and conduct of the first batches of foreigners, who arrived from the West Indian Islands, did nothing to remove that disagreeable impression; and years had still to elapse before the heroism, the uprightness, and the soldierly zeal and knowledge, of Lafayette and Duportail, of Baron de Kalb and Baron Steuben, had earned the universal and immutable esteem of American officers for their French and German comrades.

<sup>1</sup> "Three days ago General Washington Send for me, and I would Translate a paper in good Hy German. The Contents are as follows. The Continental Congress promises every man of the Hessian troops wich Comes to this Armee 200 Akers of land and a Horse and a Kow; besides a heape of Scurilious Expressions against the King. On the 20th I found four Fellows at the general's house, who proposed to spoil the British watering-place. They brought along 14 bottles of Stuff as Black as Ink. The general promised Every one £1000. Pleas to keep a good look out. This is at present all I am abel with Truth to write." The letter of Zedwitz, from which this passage is extracted, appears in the *American Archives* for August, 1776. There is a reference to the matter in Volume II., chapter 22, of Benson J. Lossing's *Pictorial Field-book of the Revolution*.

At present, however, American military men of every grade, and in all the States, were offended and alarmed by the liberties which the American agent at Paris had taken with their professional interests and prospects. Many of them had raised their own companies, and even their own battalions; spending freely out of their private means, and attending personally to details of recruiting which in Europe devolved upon the sergeants. They took pride in the consciousness that, when the commissioned ranks of the Continental army had been deliberately and unsparingly weeded of all weaker and baser elements, they themselves were judged worthy of being retained in the service of their country. Twenty-five months of frequent conflict, and constant hardship, had entitled them to the name of veterans; and now they were to be passed in the race for promotion by strangers who could not give the word of command in the only language which private soldiers understood; whose antecedents were often worse than dubious; and who, in the best of cases, had not been under fire more often than themselves. "Without derogating in the least from the character of the French officers, there is strong reason to doubt whether they have seen as much real service as our own in the course of two campaigns."<sup>1</sup> That testimony was given by George Washington; the warm friend, and unsought patron, of all brave and self-respecting men, of any nationality, who drew sword for America.

Silas Deane, with ineffable folly, was at this time scheming to get the Commander-in-Chief of the American army superseded, and his functions transferred to the Comte de Broglie, — a restless, and not very successful, diplomatist, and a fifth-rate general.<sup>2</sup> Washington was

<sup>1</sup> Washington to the President of Congress; 6th June, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The Comte de Broglie was a younger brother of the famous Marshal. In a letter of December 1776 he thus states the terms on which he would consent to serve the American Confederacy. "You will content yourself with stipulating for a military authority for the person in question, who would unite the position of a General and President of the



unaware of the plot, which would have troubled him very little had it been brought to his knowledge; and he turned his attention to the rival claims of foreign and native officers with no thought of self, and with anxious consideration for the rights, and for the legitimate susceptibilities, of others. During six months of 1777 that topic was the leading feature of his correspondence. He appealed to the good sense and moderation of any military men from Europe in whom he had reason to think that those qualities existed; he pleaded the cause of his own countrymen respectfully, but most firmly and pertinaciously, in his official communications to the President of Congress; he poured out his mind more liberally and vigorously to personal friends, and especially to Virginians, who had seats in that body; and he steadfastly refused even to contemplate the idea of throwing over Henry Knox for the sake of any artillery-man in the world.<sup>1</sup>

At length the politicians had an opportunity of learning how the soldiers felt on what was, before everything, a military question. Reports reached camp that Monsieur Ducoudray had been nominated Major General, with a commission so antedated as to give him seniority over every officer who had commanded a brigade of guns, or a division of infantry, at Trenton. Without waiting to ascertain how the fact stood, Greene, Knox, and Sullivan simultaneously wrote to Congress

Council of War, with the title of Generalissimo, Field-Marshal, &c. Of course large pecuniary considerations would have to be obtained for the preparations for the journey, and for the journey itself; and a liberal salary for the return home."

<sup>1</sup> "Dear Sir, under the privilege of friendship, I take the liberty to ask you what Congress expect I am to do with the many foreigners they have at different times promoted to the rank of field-officers, and, (by the last Resolve,) two to that of colonels? These men have no attachment nor ties to the country, further than interest binds them. They have no influence, and are ignorant of the language they are to receive and give orders in. Consequently great trouble, and much confusion, must follow." George Washington to Richard Henry Lee; Morristown, 17 May, 1777; to Monsieur Malmedy, and to Major Colerus, May 16 and 19; and to the President of Congress, February 20, May 16, and June 6, 1777.



requesting that, if the rumour proved correct, they might have permission to retire from the army. Congress, as it could not very well help doing, passed a Resolution to the effect that the three letters constituted an invasion of the liberties of the people, and an unjustifiable attempt to influence the decisions of the people's representatives. But the warning had not been thrown away; and after guarding their dignity by a long and grave debate, the delegates at Philadelphia voted that it was inexpedient to ratify the treaty into which Mr. Deane had entered with Monsieur Ducoudray and his hundred officers.<sup>1</sup> Willing to soften the blow, Congress proposed to appoint Ducoudray Inspector General of the American army; but he had the spirit to decline an office which, under the circumstances, could be nothing beyond an empty title, and announced his intention of going to the front in the character of a volunteer. The end of his story, which was not long in coming, is told in a letter written by Baron de Kalb to the Comte de Broglie. "Monsieur de Coudray has just put the Congress much at ease by his death. He was going to join the army on the sixteenth September. Crossing a ferry over the Schuylkill River he did not choose to dismount, and, wishing to correct his too mettlesome animal, the horse jumped into the stream, and he was drowned like a schoolboy. The officers of his suite, conducting themselves with arrogance, and indulging in scandal, will, I think, be dismissed discontented." It was a dispensation, (said John Adams,) which would save a good deal of quarrelling. The fate of poor Ducoudray ranks with the capture of Charles Lee as one of the mercies which befell the American Republic in the outward semblance of a startling and unforeseen calamity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note to a letter of July 12, 1777, in the Writings of George Washington.

<sup>2</sup> Ducoudray's death is related in Adams's Diary for the 18th September 1777; in De Kalb's letter to Broglie; and in the closing paragraph of the sixth chapter of Doniol's second volume.

During the long period of anticipation which intervened between the two campaigns there was everywhere a sense of extraordinary excitement in the air. Both political parties instinctively felt that a paramount crisis was at hand; and both political parties were confident that their own side would win. The Loyalists in the Eastern and Central States showed themselves eager and busy, although their activity was productive of satisfaction to themselves rather than of solid advantage to their cause. They cut down Liberty Poles; they talked of blowing up powder mills; and in the upland districts of New York State they marched about after nightfall with guns and pistols, ate a great deal of porridge and butter-milk at Tory farmhouses, shot a lieutenant through the arm, and ran away as soon as they came in contact with a detachment of Governor Clinton's militiamen.<sup>1</sup> They treated with contempt, (and none can blame them,) the edicts of Congress which fixed the price of goods and gave a forced currency to Government paper. "Tory customers," (we are told,) "with a hankering after the East Indian herb, would pay nine or ten shillings a pound for anything which resembled it in smell or taste." Some sound Whigs, who went marketing with a handful of Continental dollar notes, had their money refused by a Tory tradesman; while they themselves were ejected from the shop as "good-for-nothing rascals," and were informed that, if they wanted redress, they might carry

<sup>1</sup> *Public Papers of George Clinton*, with an Introduction by Hugh Hastings, State Historian of the State of New York: Volume I.; documents relating to April and May, 1777.

Some of the instances quoted in these paragraphs refer to the months that preceded Trenton. Towards the end of the war an advertisement appeared in the newspapers informing the gentlemen who, on the 17th of September 1776, supped at the late widow de la Montaigne's after taking down the Liberty Pole, that the bill for their supper, and their liquor, still remained undischarged; and that they would do well "to sell the iron that was about the pole, and pay their bill, as otherwise the names of all those who supped on that occasion would be published for the information of American citizens."

their grievance to the Committee of Public Safety.<sup>1</sup> A company of gentlemen at Albany dined together on the Fourth of June, and drank Happy Returns to King George, instead of waiting till that day month, and drinking Long Life to the new-born Republic. Loyalists in Massachusetts "showed all possible friendship to the Highland officers who had been captured, and allowed their own brave countrymen to be styled rebels at table without animadverting on the indecency." In South Carolina, when the savages spread desolation all along the frontier, and killed a great number of the white inhabitants, it became matter of common knowledge that "the disaffected party had been aware beforehand of the intentions of the Indians, and were elated by the prospect;" and Loyalist partisans missed no opportunity of instilling an apprehension of British vengeance into the minds of timid citizens, or of flattering the Royal officials in New York with exaggerated accounts of the poverty and distress that prevailed in the American army.

These vexatious, but for the most part not very formidable, manifestations of hostility at first roused perturbation and alarm in those against whom they were directed. The whole country-side was in a panic when some Tory guerillas, who infested the New York highlands, intercepted one of Charles Lee's orderlies, and destroyed his despatches; as a consequence of which exploit much fine writing, and impudent self-glorification, have been irrecoverably lost to posterity. The State Government was besieged with urgent, and emotionally worded, demands that light horsemen should be told off to patrol the roads, and chastise the villains who insulted the friends of liberty, and assisted her enemies in their rapine. But the Revolutionary authorities soon recovered their self-possession; and, when it was necessary to punish, they acted without precipitation, and in reasonable obedience to the dictates of

<sup>1</sup> Complaint of Zachariah Sickles to the New York Committee.

humanity.<sup>1</sup> Armed insurrection was suppressed with rigour; (for Governor Clinton was no sentimentalist;) but little encouragement was shown in high quarters to querulous and gossiping accusations against quiet people who did not wish well to the Republic. Trivial instances of the sort of conduct which, in the days of the great French Revolution, was known as "incivism," were left to the extemporised jurisdiction of angry neighbours; and their methods of proceeding, though sometimes inexcusably harsh and rough, were not unfrequently tempered by fellow-feeling, or by a dash of intentional or unconscious humour.<sup>2</sup> In more serious cases the offender was held to bail; and he would often be confined on parole within the precincts of a county-town. The inconveniences and privations incidental to this modified form of incarceration were greatly mitigated for certain prominent Loyalists who had kept open house before the Revolution, and whose former hospitality was remembered and repaid, when their day of trouble came, by influential members of the opposite party. The comforts enjoyed by this class of prisoners might well have aroused the envy of many among their captors. A letter is extant in which Washington requested the Board of War that the Loyalists, who were detained on parole, might not be quartered within any district which was occupied by his army; as he did not wish them to see with their own eyes the wretched condition of the Continental soldiers.

The most notable of these prisoners was the natural son of Benjamin Franklin, who often had occasion to

<sup>1</sup> When heads of families were committed to prison, orders were issued "to pay particular attention to their wives and children, and to see that they did not want the common necessities of life."

<sup>2</sup> A youth in a New York township, who had broken into the magazine, and stolen some of the public ammunition, was sentenced by the local committee to be confined to his father's farm for the space of one year. He was allowed to be present at "public worship on Sabbath days, and to attend funerals upon extraordinary occasions." An unlucky politician, who drank to the King's success, was taken to the guard-house, where the soldiers knocked the end out of a hogshead, and forced him to "dance Yankee Doodle in it until the next day."

repeat to himself the passage from "King Lear" about the justice of the gods in relation to men's pleasant vices; for the graceless Edmund in the tragedy was not the object of higher hopes, or the source of keener disappointment, to the sire who begot him, than was William Franklin, the royal Governor of New Jersey. "Will," (so his father wrote in the year 1749,) "is a tall proper youth, and much of a beau. He acquired a habit of idleness on the Expedition, but begins of late to apply himself to business, and I hope will become an industrious man."<sup>1</sup> The youth travelled rapidly towards success along paths which were made smooth and short by his father's well-established influence, and consummate knowledge of the world. He became Postmaster at Philadelphia, and Clerk of the House of Assembly of Pennsylvania; and in 1757 he accompanied Benjamin Franklin on a visit to England, where he passed for "one of the prettiest young gentlemen" that ever came over from America.<sup>2</sup> By this time William Franklin had learned to play his own hand of cards, for a stake which suited his own fancy. He contrived to make the acquaintance, and to win the favour, of no less a patron than Lord Bute; and in the year 1763 he was made Governor of New Jersey at the early age of thirty-two. The colony did not take his appointment as a compliment to itself; for the Whigs regarded him as a time-server and a courtier, and the Tories would not allow that he was a gentleman.<sup>3</sup> None the less he remained a sincere and vehement

<sup>1</sup> The "Expedition" was a military operation undertaken against the French in Canada, where the lad served with credit as a Captain of volunteers.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from William Strahan to Mrs. Franklin; London, 13 December 1757.

<sup>3</sup> John Penn, who was in England when Franklin obtained his Governorship, wrote out that the business had been managed so privately as to allow "no opportunity of doing one single thing that might put a stop to this shameful affair. . . . What a dishonour and a disgrace it must be to a country to have such a man at the head of it, and to sit down contented! If any *gentleman* had been appointed, it would have been a different case."



Tory; and all through the earlier stages of the American Revolution he was in hot quarrel with his Provincial Assembly.

After the Declaration of Independence New Jersey adopted a political constitution framed on popular lines. General Livingston was chosen Governor; and William Franklin was put under arrest, pronounced a virulent enemy to the country, and ordered to be confined where, and how, the Continental Congress might direct. He was, however, permitted to choose his own place of sojourn; and he fixed upon a town in Connecticut, where he led a free and jovial existence, giving tea-parties to ladies of the neighbourhood, and treating his male fellow-captives to more potent, and much more treacherous, beverages. Towards the end of November, 1776, the constables deposed that in the night season, between Saturday and Sunday, there was hallooing and shouting at Governor Franklin's lodging, the company roaring out a catch about "King George's health, and it shall go round," and a song with a chorus to the effect that Howe was a brave commander. The noise, "which might be heard forty rods off," brought in the watch; and there ensued the sort of conversation which, at that hour of the night, and under those circumstances, passes for a political argument. Franklin and his friends called the American soldiers cowards; cursed the colony, and those who governed it; prayed that the Hessians might soon be there to cut all their throats; "and uttered the most terrible oaths ever heard, introduced into almost every sentence. Mr. Burlington, when remonstrated with, said it was no sin to take God's name in vain, and told John Hall that he could not get to Heaven," inasmuch as he had nothing but Continental paper money with which to pay the expense of the journey. Blows followed words; and in the end the whole party were marched off to the guard-room. Those were not New England manners; and, of all New Englanders, they were least to the taste of Jonathan



Trumbull. A memorial has been preserved, — addressed to the Governor of Connecticut, and signed, (among other names,) by Samuel Burlington, — a portion of which reads as follows: "We beg to acquaint your Honour that we do not pretend to justify our conduct; but your Honour may rest assured that whatever improprieties happened on that night were occasioned by our being in liquor, and not with any design of offending your Honour, or any of the gentlemen in authority."<sup>1</sup>

These numerous, but desultory and objectless, ebullitions of Loyalist sentiment had inspired Sir William Howe with expectations which never were fulfilled. He was encompassed in New York by a social atmosphere most unfavourable to the formation of a correct judgment. The city was thronged by Royal officials expelled from their seats of administration; by New England merchants and country gentlemen who had been despoiled of their property, and who dared not revisit their homes; by Tory clergymen who had been rabbled by their congregations, and Tory authors whose circle of readers cared for nothing except highly spiced satires upon the iniquities and vulgarities of Congress. These men contemplated the situation through the distorting medium of intense, and in many cases justifiable, resentment; and they all of them cherished those fond hallucinations which cheer and misguide the political exile; — for exiles they already were, even though the sea did not flow between themselves and their birthplace. They were the informants and advisers of the British Commander-in-Chief, and too often his flatterers and boon-companions; for his course of life was such as the most estimable of the Loyalists watched with regret and disapproval. Sir William Howe had been brought to believe that a spirit of impatience with the Revolution prevailed far and wide throughout the Confederacy; and the Ministers in London expressed their pleasure

<sup>1</sup> Sabine's *American Loyalists*. *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by Jared Sparks. *American Archives* for June, November, and December, 1776.

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at hearing from him "that the rage of rebellion of late had considerably abated," and that the affection of the people was visibly reverting towards the King's Government.<sup>1</sup>

In an armed contest, when force rules the hour, political inclinations are of small account unless they lead to martial action; and Royalism to the North of the Potomac River, for any practical military purpose, was a barren and unfruitful creed. Further to the Southward the case was very different indeed; as time was soon to show. The local Tories of Georgia and the Carolinas, — numerous, hardy, habituated to arms, devoted to their cause, and implacable against its adversaries, — during several fiercely disputed campaigns made the war their own; but Loyalists in the Northern and Central States were for the most part content with leaving the King's troops to fight the King's battles. Oliver de Lancey of New York possessed an extensive influence, and a well deserved popularity, throughout his native province. During the late French war he had stated, and almost unquestionably with truth, that, if he were placed in command of the New York contingent, he would undertake to enlist in ten days the whole quota of the troops allotted to that colony. In the autumn of 1776 de Lancey was appointed a Brigadier General in the Royal service. He promised that, in the following Spring, he would bring into the field fifteen hundred Loyalists; but not six hundred of them were forthcoming when the army marched.<sup>2</sup> The force which Howe took with him on his expedition against Philadelphia, (an enterprise which demanded every trained soldier that he could muster,) comprised only three minute detachments of native American infantry.

That meagre outcome of Royalist effort and enthusiasm was in sorry contrast to the sixteen thousand

<sup>1</sup> Letter in reply to Sir William Howe from John Robinson, Secretary of the Treasury; March 5, 1777. *Report of American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*; Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> Sabine's *American Loyalists*; Vol. I., page 364.

New Englanders who in April 1775, within forty-eight hours after the first shot had been fired, stood in array outside the fortifications of Boston; or to the host of armed farmers who, of their own accord and at their own charges, trooped in from far and near to oppose Burgoyne at Saratoga. Lexington, and Bennington, — and other spirited encounters which are forgotten by Europe, but are still well remembered in America, — were fought, on the side of the Revolution, by a force which may not unfairly be described as the *posse comitatus* of the neighbouring districts: whereas the only success of any importance which stands to the credit of the Northern Loyalists, as apart from the British regulars, was the battle of Oriskany in the Mohawk valley; and more than half the Loyalists there present, and those by no means the least forward in the *mêlée*, were painted Indians. The trumpery character of the Tory demonstrations against the Revolutionary authorities in rebellious States, and the ease with which those demonstrations were suppressed, profoundly disappointed the hopes of the British Cabinet; and British veterans sorrowfully counted the handful of Americans who were attracted by the secure pay, and the smart uniform, of the Royal service, as compared with the tens of thousands of recruits who did not shrink from the starvation, and the threadbare misery, which awaited them in the Continental army. Military men look to military results; and the best English officers, naturally and pardonably, declined to believe in the single-mindedness of partisans who would not strike a blow for their convictions. That opinion found expression in the words of a distinguished soldier who already had acquired the esteem, and was destined ere long to enjoy the personal regard and friendship, of his Sovereign. "I shall now," Colonel Harcourt wrote, "conclude with a few remarks, which I think the very little experience I have already had in this war sufficiently authorises me to make. The first is that, however Government may have been flattered by the representations of a few

interested individuals, you may depend upon it, as a fact, that we have not met with ten, I believe I might say two, disinterested friends to the supremacy of Great Britain."<sup>1</sup>

Washington's prolonged stay at Morristown was something of an oasis in the desert of his severe existence. Two years of perpetual labour, the last six months of which were passed amidst frightful hardships, and anxiety very near akin to despair, had not been endured with impunity. Before the close of winter he was in low health, and those most immediately about him feared lest he might not have the strength to rally. It was then that he took the Communion with the Presbyterians.<sup>2</sup> "The service," (so the homely record runs,) "was held in the rear of the parsonage on Morris Street. The congregation, wrapped in their heaviest clothing, with no roof above them but the winter sky, gathered about their pastor, having cheerfully relinquished their church to the suffering soldiers." Washington had forbidden his wife to join him in camp, as the movements of his army were uncertain, and his lodgings rough and crowded; but, when Mrs. Washington learned that her husband was ill, she resolved within herself that the question was one for her, and not for him, to settle.<sup>3</sup> On the fifteenth of March she arrived at Morristown, and the newspapers were soon able to report that his Excellency was now perfectly recovered, and had in addition the satisfaction of his amiable lady's company. The weather improved; that northern corner of New Jersey was a land of plenty; and Morris-

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Colonel the Honourable William Harcourt to his father, Earl Harcourt: New Brunswick, March 17th, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The story is related in an earlier volume of this history.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Washington had foreseen that the risk of small-pox in a military camp might be employed as a reason for keeping her from the General's side when her presence was most needed. She accordingly got herself inoculated soon after the war began, and went through the illness with no injurious effect on her strength or beauty.

town stood high, safe, and pleasant, on a table-land, with steep slopes, which commanded a wide prospect over a beautiful rolling country.<sup>1</sup> During those years of trouble many important Whig families from the Central States had sought sanctuary among the hills, where they formed a large and friendly circle, with money and leisure to spare, and of one mind in politics. Lady Washington, (as the others, when speaking among themselves, respectfully called her,) at once set the tone, and gave an example of the personal habits which were thenceforward to prevail in good American society until the war was over, and the country had emerged from peril. The ladies who first paid her a visit of ceremony, in their "best bibs and bands, and most elegant silks and ruffles," found her in a plain brown dress, and a check apron. "She received us," said one of the party, "very graciously and easily; but, after the compliments were over, she resumed her knitting. There we were without a stitch of work, and sitting in state; but General Washington's lady was knitting stockings for herself and husband."<sup>2</sup> From that day onward no hands were idle; fine clothes disappeared from use; sewing and knitting clubs were organised for the benefit of the army; and in some kitchens, well known to the younger soldiers, the meal-bags were always open, and the soup simmering on the fire.

The way of life in Washington's household was simple in the extreme, but not austere, and the very reverse of silent; for he loved to surround himself with young people who talked their own talk, and amused themselves in their own fashion. The three beautiful

<sup>1</sup> A Virginian lady, who spent that winter at Morristown, speaks of it as "a clever little village whose three spires would make it seem pretentious." The churches were hospitals; the larger buildings had been converted into magazines; and the troops lived in log huts. Washington's own domicile was a house of public entertainment, which fronted the village-green, and, (like a typical American tavern,) was kept by a Colonel.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Martha Washington*, by Anne Hollingsworth Wharton; Chapter VII.



daughters of Governor Livingston resided with their aunt Lady Stirling, and their cousin Lady Kitty Duer, in a fine old Manor-house not far from Morristown; and there was no dearth of wit and gallantry among the young fellows who, with Alexander Hamilton as their leading spirit, were members of what, in the military parlance of the day, was known as the General's family.<sup>1</sup> The troop of girls, with a due proportion of aides-de-camp, attended the Washingtons "on their horse-back parties," during which the General kept his eyes open; for, like Wellington in Spain, he always studied his theatre of operations from the saddle. A spacious room in the Commissariat store-house was reserved for dancing, and for the meetings of a Masonic Lodge, at which the Commander-in-Chief was often present, and where he conferred the degrees of the Order upon his companions in arms. These pastimes and festivities, though heartily enjoyed, were of Sparta rather than of Capua. The entire cost, during four and a half months, of maintaining the Headquarters Staff, and of exercising the hospitalities obligatory upon the general of a very hungry army, amounted to less than five hundred pounds; and even this modest outlay, in the view of Washington, required a special note stating, in his own hand-writing, that all the separate items were recorded for the examination of Congress.

Small-pox was then the scourge of camp-life, and not unfrequently obtruded itself, at an awkward moment, as a most disturbing factor in the calculations of a strategist. In June 1776, when the British armada was expected in New York Bay, and not a man could be spared from duty, Washington had combated and controlled the malady by systematic and rigorous isola-

<sup>1</sup> Captain Graydon, of Philadelphia, visited Morristown, and was invited by Washington to dinner, where he met the Miss Livingstons. Colonel Hamilton presided at the General's table, and kept the company alive; and in the evening the young people assembled again at a tea-party. Now that all question of a Royal custom-duty was past and gone, tea was again beginning to be served in Whig houses.



tion of the small-pox patients.<sup>1</sup> The conditions of time and place now seemed favourable for the adoption of a more thorough and sure remedy, which was, however, by no means exempt from risk; for it seemed quite within the chances that Sir William Howe might advance in force during some week when half the American rank and file were incapacitated by the results of inoculation. But in the estimation of Washington the probability, or even the possibility, of seeing his army ruined by a horrible disease, at the very turning-point of a campaign, like the army of poor General Thomas in Canada, was more alarming still; and of the two dangers he chose the least. Early in February 1777 he informed Governor Trumbull that the impracticability of keeping the small-pox from spreading in the natural way had determined him, upon the most mature deliberation, to inoculate all the new troops that had not had the disorder.

The measure was popular among soldiers, and in the homes whence soldiers came;<sup>2</sup> and the military authorities lost no opportunity of recommending it to public confidence. The army was carefully informed that, when the process was tried at West Point in the New York Highlands, only four cases out of five hundred had ended fatally; and there had been nights when the parole, and the countersign, issued to the American sentries were the words, "Inoculation" and "Health."<sup>3</sup> Washington gave the order; the surgeons at Morristown, as soon as permission was accorded, fell to work with a will; the Presbyterian and Baptist churches, which had been made over to them for infirmaries, were filled and emptied several times in

<sup>1</sup> *American Archives* of June 1776.

<sup>2</sup> "The women of all this district, as far as Boston and New York, are slender and straight. They have a very white skin, and a healthy colour in their faces, without having to paint. Hardly any of those I have seen are pitted with small-pox; but then inoculation has been common here for many years." Letter from a German Officer in Burgoyne's army, quoted in Lowell's *Hessians*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Private Soldier under Washington*; Chapter VI.

succession; and the streets of the village were soon thronged by a multitude of cheerful, and very formidable, convalescents. Washington had acted under sound advice, and his injunctions were carried into effect by enthusiastic and very capable agents; for his army-doctors loved their profession, and already gave earnest of the scientific ingenuity, and manual skill, for which the physicians and surgeons of their nation have long been celebrated. Too few in number; scantily provided with the commonest hospital necessities; and sometimes, (in those days of interrupted commerce,) absolutely destitute of the drugs which were in ordinary use, they fought their uphill battle cleverly, and on the whole victoriously.<sup>1</sup> Some years after this date their merit was discerned by no less a competent judge than Baron Larrey, who, as Head Surgeon in the Imperial Guard during all Napoleon's wars, most assuredly enjoyed unique opportunities for perfecting himself in the practice of his art; and who was in the habit of drawing very accurate comparisons between the surgical proficiency of his own, and other, countries. Toward the commencement of his career he had served in America, when the armies of Rochambeau and Washington lay in camp together. Larrey then formed, and late in life he placed on evidence, a high opinion of the American surgeons, who were "very bold in amputations, and who saved many more of their wounded than the French, although they had a less well-situated Hospital."<sup>2</sup>

The Americans, much to their advantage, were an

<sup>1</sup> In July 1776 the Medical Department of the American army advertised for a large quantity of dry herbs for baths and fomentations, particularly balm, hyssop, wormwood, and mallows. "Good people at a distance" were prayed to collect and cure herbs. It was customary to prepare the system for inoculation by doses of calomel; as a substitute for which the doctors at West Point were fain to use "an extract of butternut, made by boiling down the inner bark of the tree."

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Military Surgery*, by Baron Larrey, First Surgeon of the Guard, Knight of the Iron Crown, and Commander of the Legion of Honour.

eminently practical-minded people; but it cannot be denied that, in their relation to military life, they carried that valuable quality to a perilous excess. They turned out to fight, readily enough, when a battle was imminent; but to remain in camp between-whiles was in their eyes nothing better than a deplorable waste of time which might very easily be put to more remunerative uses. That was Washington's standing difficulty; and he seldom experienced it in an acuter form than during the Spring of 1777. February, March, and April passed away; but the State governments still kept back from the front their newly-raised battalions of regular infantry; and the militia, with more excuse, refused to abandon their private avocations, and remained tranquilly at home. A Pennsylvanian officer captured at Fort Washington, and subsequently released on parole, paid a visit to his former comrades in their cantonments at Morristown. "I had been extremely anxious," he wrote, "to see our army. Here it was; but I could see nothing that deserved the name. I was told, indeed, that it was much weakened by detachments; and I was glad to find that there was some cause for the present paucity of soldiers. I could not doubt, however, that things were going well. The Commander-in-Chief, and all about him, were in excellent spirits."

Washington himself might well be hopeful; for he had devised, and carefully matured, a plan of operations based upon an intimate acquaintance with the idiosyncrasies of his countrymen. Before the end of May he sent his wife back to Mount Vernon, made a long day's march to the southward, and planted his army within a few miles of New Brunswick, the westernmost of the British garrisons. He had selected a very strong position. A range of heights, steep on the side towards his enemy, sloped gently rearwards into a well-watered valley where a much larger army than his might have encamped under cover from cannon-shot, and amidst abundant pasturage for their

horses. Below the hills stood the village of Middlebrook, which was aptly named; for the Raritan flowed deep and swift along its front, and a stream, encased in ravines, protected it on either flank. "Our right," so Washington wrote, "is our most accessible and weakest part; but two or three redoubts will render it as secure as could be wished;" and he wished, (and moreover he was fully determined,) that on right, left, and centre, his lines should be nothing short of impregnable.<sup>1</sup> Statesman and soldier that he was, he had placed himself in close proximity to the English for carefully considered reasons of high policy. He purposed, by sounding the alarm of war, to rouse his country from its false security; to quicken the remissness of the Provincial governments; and to replenish his army with fresh regiments which, when once they were under his hand, he would take very good care never to let go until the campaign was finally decided. And, again, he was convinced that Sir William Howe would not venture to advance against Philadelphia through the Jerseys, and across the Delaware, leaving behind him a powerful and enterprising adversary planted close up against his line of communication with New York city. Washington felt assured that, by this manœuvre, he would impose a passive attitude upon his opponents; and he purposed, "in the meantime, by light bodies of militia countenanced by a few Continental troops, to harass them, and weaken their numbers by continual skirmishes." So he explained himself to Benedict Arnold, in a letter marked by the confidential freedom which one master of an art employs when writing to another. That was the much lauded Fabian policy, which had not been invented by Washington, nor by Fabius either; for it is the course pursued, in every age and country, by military commanders, of solid judgment and firm

<sup>1</sup> All the places mentioned in this Section may be found in a map at the end of this volume, — which, like those preceding it, has been adapted from the Atlas to Marshall's *Life of Washington*; Philadelphia, 1804.

character, against a foe who for the time being is too strong to be successfully grappled with in ranged battle.

The game had now been opened by Washington; the next move fell to Sir William Howe; and he took it with even more than his wonted dilatoriness. On the thirteenth of June he transferred his army to the Southern bank of the Raritan, by means of pontoons which had been sent out from England half a year too late; for, if they had been supplied in time, Lord Cornwallis would without fail have captured Philadelphia in the second week of the previous December. The British were twice as many as their adversaries; and better troops had seldom filed across a bridge in more ardent quest of an enemy. "The veteran officers," (said an American historian,) "alike German and English, agreed that they had never seen such a body of men. Every soldier was eager for a battle." The long line of Royal brigades took up their ground between Somerset Court House on the left, and Middlebush on the right.<sup>1</sup> A Major of Engineers, on whose opinion Howe implicitly relied, was commissioned to reconnoitre the hostile position; and he reported that an attempt to storm it would result in certain disaster to the assailants.<sup>2</sup> As Washington had already been at Middlebrook for more than a fortnight, it is difficult to understand why Sir William had not taken measures for obtaining this information earlier. If he had been as fond of riding as his opponent,<sup>3</sup> he would long ere this have sallied out from New York attended by a troop of Colonel Harcourt's dragoons, and have looked into matters through his own telescope; instead of bringing many thousand fine infantry, and a long train of guns, as his escort on an expedition which, if the

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft's *Revolution* : Epoch Fourth, Chapter 20.

<sup>2</sup> Jones's *History of New York* : Volume I., Chapter 9.

<sup>3</sup> Washington, who wrote only one letter to Congress during the week that Howe lay before Middlebrook, explained his silence by assuring the President that he had been "almost constantly on horseback."



right name has to be found for it, most assuredly cannot be termed a wise man's errand.

The British commander henceforward relinquished the notion of approaching Philadelphia by land; if, indeed, he had seriously entertained it. Nothing now remained for him except to retrace his steps; but Sir William Howe was constitutionally averse to taking a resolution, and above all an unpleasant resolution, quickly. To the surprise and amusement of the American officers who were surveying him from across the Raritan, he placidly and deliberately began to intrench his camp, as if he had come into their neighbourhood to spend a quiet summer. He soon, however, became conscious that, if an aggressive strategy was hazardous, there was danger likewise in delay and inaction; for he had much to lose, and nothing whatever to gain, by lingering in the position where he at present lay. He had collected, and led into the field, every soldier whom he could venture to withdraw from the garrisons of Newport, of Long Island, and of New York city; and there were no reinforcements to follow. Washington's power, on the contrary, increased daily, and almost hourly. General Putnam despatched from Peekskill, in the Northern Highlands, a large force of Continental infantry, and pushed them down towards Middlebrook in three detachments, with an interval of one day's march between each column. Benedict Arnold had been summoned from Connecticut to make good the crossings of the Delaware River against the invader, and to assume the general military charge of Pennsylvania. Proud of serving under the orders of so redoubtable a fighting man, the State militia turned out in great force, expensively equipped, and all the more useful as soldiers on account of their recent experience of war in the short and sharp winter campaign of Princeton.

The ministry in London had convinced themselves that the loyalty, or at all events the timidity, of the New Jersey people would revive when the Royal troops



were again quartered in their midst; but the hope proved delusive. The Jerseys, in the course of one and the same twelvemonth, had been occupied in turns by each of the hostile armies; and they had learned to appreciate the difference between Americans who were kept within the bounds of duty by General Washington, and Germans who were left to their own devices by General Howe. Their militia battalions in the Revolutionary camp were at once brought up to their full strength; and the bands of armed and mounted farmers,—which, ever since the Hessian ravages, had been the military speciality of New Jersey,—hovered in flank and rear of Howe's army; swooped down upon his convoys; and terrorised into an enforced neutrality that small, and diminishing, section of Tories who had not as yet torn up the British protection-papers, and taken the oath of allegiance to the United States. Washington infused additional vitality into the proceedings of the Jerseymen by sending to their assistance Colonel Daniel Morgan, and his Virginian Rangers, who knew the wiles of the forest, and could hit a silver dollar, (if such a coin still existed within the American camp,) at a measured distance of sixty yards.<sup>1</sup> Regulars and militia, riflemen from the frontier, and country-folk with their fowling-pieces and powder-horns,—they all displayed an alacrity which affected Washington with very novel, and most comforting, sensations. His letters during the last fortnight of that June were closely packed with urgent business; and yet he often found space in his paper for a hearty tribute to the patriotism of his countrymen. "It is a happy circumstance," (so he wrote to Arnold,) "that such an animation prevails among the people. It will inspire the people themselves with confidence in

<sup>1</sup> In the Commander-in-Chief's letter of instructions to Morgan there occurs a paragraph suggesting that the Colonel should dress one or two of his companies "in the Indian style, and let them make the attack with yelling and screaming, as the Indians do." The idea, which was hardly worthy of Washington, does not appear to have commended itself to Colonel Morgan.

their own strength, by discovering to every individual the zeal and spirit of their neighbours.”<sup>1</sup>

On the nineteenth of June Howe broke up his camp, and disappeared from the vicinity of Middlebrook. Next day, when the Americans became aware that, instead of making a flank-march on Philadelphia, he had set his face steadily rearward towards Perth Amboy and the sea, they made the country-side resound with their cheering, and with salvoes of gun-powder which they were no longer afraid of wasting. Washington, with some misgivings, descended from his stronghold; but it was neither safe nor easy to molest a retreating force of superior strength, which had a very short space to traverse before reaching home, and which had never been defeated in battle. The British soldiers marched along silent, and very gloomy; in a temper boding ill to any foe who might be incautious enough to meddle with them. At last they had an opportunity of turning upon their pursuers. Stirling's division had approached them unsupported; and he was vigorously attacked by Cornwallis. Stirling, who was still something of a military pedant, neglected the rare advantages which the locality presented, and drew up his command in parade-ground order; while Cornwallis made no mistakes, and gave full play to the indignant valour of his followers. The ardour excited by an emulation between the English and German troops “was conspicuous and irresistible.”<sup>2</sup> Their one thought was to get at the Americans; and Stirling's regiments, leaving three field-pieces, and many prisoners, in the hands of the Hessian grenadiers and the British footguards, retired with headlong haste, and most certainly not in any one of those tactical formations which were dear to the heart of their Divisional General. Washington thereupon went back to the hills; and Howe

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Major General Schuyler, on the sixteenth June; to Major General Arnold, on the seventeenth; and to the President of Congress on the twentieth.

<sup>2</sup> “History of Europe” in the *Annual Register* for 1777; Chapter 7.

transported his army to Staten Island. He was attended across the channel by a troop of broken and ruined men;—those New Jersey Tories whom he had forced into a public declaration of Royalist fidelity with no reasonable prospect that he would in the end be able to protect them from the resentment of their Republican fellow-citizens. His latest act before departing intensified that resentment; for, as he descended the Raritan, he burned down the dwelling-houses, in town and country, which had sheltered his own troops during that inclement winter. “The evacuation of Jersey at this time,” (so Washington wrote,) “seems to be a peculiar mark of Providence, as the inhabitants have an opportunity of securing their harvests of hay and grain, which would in all probability have undergone the same fate with many farm-houses, had it been ripe enough to take fire. The distress of many of the inhabitants, who were plundered not only of their effects, but of their provision of every kind, was such, that I sent down several loads of meat and flour to supply their present wants.” Sir William Howe left the Jerseys in a miserable plight; and he never again set his foot upon their soil.<sup>1</sup>

Washington, though he had the very strongest reasons for getting at the inward meaning of Sir William Howe’s strategical movements, confessed that he had been “much at a loss to account for these strange manœuvres.” Howe’s own explanation was that he marched out to Middlebrook on the chance of tempting his adversary to fight a battle; and he claimed that the stratagem had succeeded.<sup>2</sup> But any advantage which

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Major General Armstrong, 4th July, 1777; to the President of Congress, 22nd June; and to Major General Schuyler, 2nd July. In all these letters the burning of houses, and the plunder of those which were left standing, is described as enormous in extent, and of set and systematic purpose. “The late conduct of the enemy,” (so Governor Trumbull was informed by his son, the Commissary-General of the American armies,) “has converted all the Tories in this part of the world, and left not one remaining.”

<sup>2</sup> Howe’s despatch to Lord George Germaine; *London Gazette* of August 22, 1777. Howe spoke to the same effect in the House of Commons on March 29, 1779.

he had obtained over General Stirling fell greatly short of those victorious and decisive results which the King of England had been led to anticipate. His Majesty had informed Lord North that the campaign, in Sir William Howe's opinion, would "go deep towards ending this vexatious though necessary business;"<sup>1</sup> and the hope which George the Third ventured to entertain was shared by many, and perhaps by most, of his subjects. On the fifteenth of June, while Howe was encamped before Middlebrook, Doctor Price wrote thus from his residence in a southern suburb of London: "The general talk here of military men, and of the Ministry, is that Philadelphia will be taken, and the war with the Americans decided, this summer. Such is the confidence with which this is given out that many of those who are least disposed to credit such assertions are staggered. So certain do the Bishops in particular think the speedy conquest of America that they have formed a committee for taking into consideration measures for settling Bishops in America, agreeably to an intimation at the conclusion of the Archbishop of York's sermon in February last to the Society for propagating the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

Surprise and mortification very naturally ensued when it became known that the forward movement of the British had been abruptly discontinued, and their whole army withdrawn to the islands in New York Bay. A professional reputation, as considerable as that of Sir William Howe, always dies hard; and his sturdier admirers in America did their utmost to defend him. "We do not," (so one of them reported from Nova Scotia,) "hear yet of any general action. Our General acts upon the solid principles of old Fabius, which worries and dis-

<sup>1</sup> The King's letter was written from Kew on July the eleventh, after the retirement from Middlebrook, but long before the story of it arrived in England.

<sup>2</sup> Letters to and from Richard Price, D.D., F.R.S.; 1767-1790: Reprinted from *The Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, May, 1903.

treasures the rebels more than a battle.”<sup>1</sup> But a campaign in which the part of Fabius was doubled, and that of Hannibal altogether omitted, was an exhilarating performance to no one, and least of all to the British tax-payer. The announcement that Sir William Howe had penetrated into the heart of New Jersey, — had stayed there a week without enlisting any active support from a population whose attachment to the royal cause had been loudly proclaimed, and sincerely credited, in London, — and had then left the province in General Washington’s undisputed possession, afforded matter for serious reflection to unprejudiced Englishmen of both political parties. They were painfully impressed by the inertness and helplessness of the American loyalists; and they reflected with dismay that a country, which took so very long to conquer, would necessarily cost a terrible amount of money to retain. A permanent military occupation of the thirteen colonies could not fail to involve England in a never-ending expenditure which all the treasures that had been extracted in times past from Peru, and Mexico, would hardly have sufficed to defray. Horace Walpole declared that, as far as his own observation went, General Howe’s retirement from in front of General Washington had given rise to a feeling of positive despair. “In one thing,” he said, “all that come from America agree, that an alienation from this country is incredible and universal; so that instead of obtaining a revenue thence, which was the pretence of the war, the conquest would only entail boundless expense to preserve it. The New World will at last be revenged on the Old.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Eleventh Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*; Appendix, Part V., page 417.

<sup>2</sup> Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann; Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1777.



### CHAPTER III

BURGOYNE'S ARMY. BURGOYNE'S PROCLAMATION.

SCHUYLER AND GATES. TICONDEROGA

THE exultation in America was in full proportion, and something over, to the chagrin and disappointment which prevailed in England. But these emotions were all of them premature; for the crisis was still to come; and the combatants had in front of them a whole year of fierce and continuous tussle, with frequent and memorable alternations of triumph and defeat. And yet, distant as might be the termination of that prolonged and well-contested campaign, the inevitable issue had already been decided in Downing Street before ever the fighting began. The British plan of operations had been maturely and copiously discussed by the British Cabinet, and had been hopelessly and grievously bungled. All through the winter and spring Sir William Howe, and the Ministry in London, were in active communication; if indeed that expression can be applied to a correspondence which had so far to travel, and travelled so slowly, that an answer seldom came to hand within fourteen weeks after a letter had been written.<sup>1</sup>

Those were circumstances in which the government at home had no rational course open before it except to adopt the advice, and strengthen the hands, of the general in the field. Sir William Howe had been careful and specific in his proposals, guarded in his promises, and very far from immoderate in his demands. He was enough of a politician to know something, though not everything, about the ways of the British War Office; and, (while he placed on record his conviction that a very large number of additional troops was re-

<sup>1</sup> The reply to Sir William Howe's despatch of the 30th November, 1776, reached him on the 9th March, 1777. He wrote another most important letter on the 2nd April, and received the answer on the 16th August.



quired in America,) he confined himself to asking for a reinforcement of fifteen thousand rank and file, which would raise his army to the indispensable minimum of five-and-thirty thousand effective men. He represented that, even with this force in hand, it was useless to begin by an attempt on New England, where the population was very large, and of warlike temper; and where Washington, who was sure to follow the British everywhere, and never to fight them except at his own time, and on ground of his own choosing, would have them at a considerable disadvantage. In Pennsylvania, however, the prospect was very different. The local militia of that State was of comparatively small weight in the scale of war; it would be incumbent upon the American commander to risk a battle in order to protect the Capital of the Confederacy; "and my opinion," (said Howe,) "has always been that the defeat of the rebel regular army was the surest road to peace." When that army had been crushed, it was not one province, but three, which would constitute the certain and immediate prize of victory; for the destinies of New York and New Jersey were bound up in the fate of Pennsylvania. The royal authority would be firmly re-established in a vast, compact, and central region, where political inclinations were nearly balanced; and where love of ease, and the craving for peace, must always induce a majority of the people to accept, and even to welcome, the dominion of the strongest. From that secure, and conveniently situated, base of operations the British army would thereafter proceed to attack, and subjugate, first Virginia and the Carolinas, and eventually Connecticut and Massachusetts. It was a policy, (so Sir William Howe declared,) which he was confident would lead to a prosperous conclusion of the war.

That was a reasonable and practicable scheme, thought out by a man who had learned the geography of America from recent, and most instructive, experience; and who was familiar with her roads, her waterways, her forests, and (above all) with the quality of her

people. It was an occasion when everything should have been left to the undivided responsibility of the officer in command on the spot. Napoleon has said that one bad general is better than two good ones;<sup>1</sup> and Sir William Howe's projected campaign was now spoiled by the interference of a man whom it would be satire to call a good general, and whose orders were issued, not from the tent or the saddle, but from a desk in a public office three thousand miles away. Lord George Germaine had been made Secretary for the Colonies because he could debate, and for no other reason in the world; but he esteemed himself highly as a military authority, although he had long ago been dismissed with ignominy from military employment. He had never served outside Europe; he underrated the resources of the Americans; he entirely misconceived their national character; and he hated the very name of Bostonian. The most successful performance of his whole life had been that artful and powerful diatribe against the pretentious shopkeepers, and the "riotous rabble," of Boston which carried triumphantly through Parliament the Bill for putting an end to representative government in Massachusetts; and his private letters prove that the eloquence of his vituperation was inspired by sincere dislike and contempt for the population which he was denouncing. His judgment on military questions, bad at the best, was distorted by his political prejudices. Germaine deliberately estimated the doubtful and dearly purchased British success at Bunker's Hill as a mortal blow to the New Englanders, whose troops, in his view, were too undisciplined to "act well upon the defensive." In point of fact, for the size of the forces engaged, Bunker's Hill was the most murderous of all defensive battles which had been fought since the invention of gunpowder.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Bonaparte to Carnot; Lodi, May 14, 1796.

<sup>2</sup> *Manuscripts of Mrs. Stopford Sackville of Drayton House, Northamptonshire.* The first volume includes letters from Germaine of July 2, 1774; and of May 30, June 13, and July 26, 1775.

Such were the qualifications and antecedents of the minister to whom had been committed the charge of recovering America for the Crown. Germaine exercised Lord Chatham's functions; but he had not mastered Lord Chatham's methods. If he mistrusted a general on active service, he ought to have recalled him, as he himself had been recalled after Minden and replaced by Granby. But, as long as Howe was retained in command, Germaine should have provided him with the means of victory as loyally as Chatham had supplied them to Wolfe and Amherst, Hawke, Boscawen, Clive, and the Keppels. He should have left Quebec and Montreal in the secure custody of Sir Guy Carleton, whose masculine statesmanship, and martial energy, had brought the northern colony safe through much graver perils than any by which it now was threatened; and most of the royal troops in Canada might then have been transferred by sea to New York Bay, as a valuable addition to the strength of the main British army.<sup>1</sup> Every soldier, meanwhile, who could be spared from any barrack in the three kingdoms, should have been shipped across the ocean to make up the tale of those reinforcements for which Sir William Howe quietly and respectfully, but most insistently, petitioned. He had represented himself as having use for at least twenty thousand more men; but he consented to make fifteen thousand serve. The Home Government responded by promising him eight thousand, and sent him exactly twenty-nine hundred, but never a bayonet or a sabre more.<sup>2</sup>

Germaine had conceived the ambitious hope of com-

<sup>1</sup> This course was so obvious that a report of its having been carried into execution made its way into well-informed newspapers. "It is said," (so one journal reported,) "that General Burgoyne has got orders to leave a garrison at Quebec, embark the troops, and bring them round by sea to New York, as it will take too much time to cross the Lakes."

<sup>2</sup> These undisputed facts are minutely detailed by Sir William Howe in his speech to the House of Commons of March, 1779. "The army," he said, "fit for actual duty, exclusive of about two thousand provincials, was fourteen thousand short of the number I had expected."

pensating for deficiency of numbers by brilliant and novel strategy. That resource has frequently been employed with success in wars between regular armies, and in highly civilised regions; although perhaps not quite so frequently as historians have induced their readers to believe. But in order to beat down the resistance, and enforce the obedience, of an armed and resolute population dispersed over an enormous extent of country of which many districts are only partially settled, or altogether unreclaimed from the desert, an overwhelming superiority of strength on the side of the invader is an indispensable requisite. To that truth, however, Lord George Germaine was blind; and he made preparations for entangling the enemy in a network of complicated and delicate manœuvres. A mixed force of Tories and Indians, under the command of Colonel St. Leger, was to march down the Mohawk valley from the west; while the Canadian army was to traverse the Lakes, and join hands with Sir William Howe, as he advanced northwards towards Albany. At that point all the three columns would converge upon the Americans, in front, flank, and rear; and would master and occupy the whole course of the Hudson river, so as to dissever the New England States from the rest of the insurgent colonies.<sup>1</sup> Such a design looked well on paper, and was cleverly contrived for use on one of those bewildering occasions when a Cabinet of civilian politicians is under the necessity of resolving itself into a Council of War. The secret leaked out, and was hailed in fashionable circles with a feeling of satisfaction, which rose to veritable enthusiasm when an ardent and voluble exponent of Germaine's proposals appeared upon the scene in the person of General Burgoyne. That officer had hurried home, as usual, to look after his professional interests; and all through that winter season he was whispering with Ministers, begging for a private interview with his rather reluctant Sovereign, haranguing the citizens

<sup>1</sup> A map of the district between Quebec and Albany may be found at the end of the Fourth Chapter of this volume.

of Westminster, and giving lectures on military science in clubs and drawing-rooms. At a Cabinet Council, held in March 1777, Burgoyne was selected to command the northern army; and amateur strategists in London society, of both sexes, spoke airily and approvingly of his plan for cutting the rebellion in two by a chain of military posts which was to extend, without a break, from the River St. Lawrence to Manhattan Island.

The principles of strategy, however, are anything but nonsense, although nonsense may be talked about them; and the most essential of those principles was recklessly violated by Germaine, when he made over to the Americans the immense advantage of operating on an interior line of country. Montreal and New York, the points of departure for the two principal British armies, were separated from each other by three hundred miles of hostile territory. Every request for mutual support, and every suggestion for a modification in the original plan of campaign, had to be sent round over fifteen hundred miles of river and ocean. The despatches exchanged between Howe and Burgoyne, when they were not intercepted by the enemy, took little less than three months to go and come; while the Commander-in-Chief at New York was unable to maintain any communication whatever with Colonel St. Leger; for the head of the Mohawk Valley lay in the depths of the wilderness, more than fifty leagues to the southwest of Montreal. On the other hand the several divisions of the American army were quartered at a reasonable distance from each other, in fertile and open districts traversed by highways which, whether good or bad, were among the best roads on that Continent. Washington might learn what was passing on the Northern Lakes within fifty hours after it was known at Albany. He had stationed a powerful reserve, — equipped for a start on short and sudden notice, and under the alert supervision of Israel Putnam, — at a central point from which reinforcements could reach his own camp at Morristown in four easy marches, and



could cover the journey to Ticonderoga well inside the fortnight. Each of the three isolated British columns, from first to last, depended exclusively on its own strength, and had no alternative except to retreat, or succumb, when that strength became exhausted; but the Republican generals were in a position to assist each other in turn wherever, and whenever, the danger threatened. Not a few Continental regiments, after fighting to the finish at Saratoga, rejoined Washington in ample time to take part in that forward movement by which the campaign in the Central provinces was eventually decided. Nor was that all; for America had been placed by the folly of her adversary in a situation which enabled her to get double service from her best military leaders, as well as from her best battalions. The preposterous character of Germaine's grand strategical combination is curiously illustrated by the opportunities for distinction which it successively afforded to one and the same American officer. Benedict Arnold first put Colonel St. Leger to the rout; he next helped to defeat General Burgoyne; and he ended by being appointed to command in Philadelphia when the British army was at length obliged to evacuate that city.

Germaine's plan had a special attraction for its author because it inflicted a public slight upon one whom he regarded as a personal opponent. He detested Sir Guy Carleton as a wise and sympathetic ruler, whose policy was in sharp contrast to his own; as a distinguished ornament of the profession to which he himself had ceased to belong; and as a subordinate who was at no pains to simulate respect or admiration for his official superior. The Secretary of State would long ago have done the Colonial Governor a very ill turn, if their common master had not interfered to protect the worthier of his two servants.<sup>1</sup> George the Third was resolved that the man who had saved Canada should never be subjected to wanton insult, nor visited by a

<sup>1</sup> George the Third to Lord North; Queen's House, December 13th, 1776. 10 minutes past 9 A.M.



direct penalty; but he did not now feel justified in overriding his Ministers when they urged him to appoint Burgoyne to the command of the northern army. That appointment was a cruel blow to the Governor of Canada. As soon as Burgoyne crossed the British frontier he would be, to all intents and purposes, an independent general; making requisitions which would have to be supplied, promptly and obediently, from the material resources of Carleton's province; and corresponding directly, over the Governor's head, with that Secretary of State in London who was the Governor's notorious enemy. The situation was intolerable. Sir Guy Carleton sent in his resignation; but Lord North refused to accept it on the ground that his abandonment of such a post, at so critical a moment, would be disadvantageous to the interests of the State. George the Third expressed his concurrence with the action of the Prime Minister in a letter marked by the honourable feeling, the sound common-sense, the plain language, and the exemplary brevity, with which a King ought to write. "Anyone," he said, "that will for an instant suppose himself in the situation of Sir Guy Carleton, must feel that the resigning the government of Quebec is the only dignified part. Though I think, as things were situated, the ordering him to remain in the province was a necessary measure, yet it must be owned to be mortifying to a soldier. The General seems at the same time to have facilitated as much as possible the steps necessary for enabling Burgoyne to cross the Lakes."<sup>1</sup>

That praise had been fairly earned; for Carleton, in his dealings with Burgoyne, displayed rare public spirit, and a still rarer generosity towards the man who was virtually, although not nominally, his successor in office. Nothing which could contribute to securing a victory for the British arms was neglected by the Governor of Canada. He maintained in complete repair the Royal squadron which dominated the Lakes, and

<sup>1</sup> George the Third to Lord North; Kew, July 2nd, 1777. 56 min. past 5 P.M.

the flotilla of barges which was to carry Burgoyne and his troops two thirds of their way by water. He strained his influence, and hazarded his popularity, by urging the French settlers, during the season when the crops should be sown, to hand over their teams for the purposes of military transport, and to engage themselves as pioneers and boatmen in the service of the expedition. He sedulously practised the royal infantry in manœuvres specially adapted for the requirements of forest warfare; and, reserving the very smallest garrison which the internal security of his province demanded, he handed over to Burgoyne the rest of the Canadian army in high condition, and in a state of perfect discipline.<sup>1</sup>

A fine little army it was; and in some important respects John Burgoyne was not unworthy to command it. He knew how to keep troops in better order, — with less of the court-martial, and very much less of the lash, — than any general of his time; for he treated his officers as friends, and the private soldiers, (to employ his own words,) “as thinking beings.”<sup>2</sup> He was eagerly welcomed by his new command. One of his subalterns confidently assured a friend in England that there was no doubt of the result of the campaign “if good discipline, joined to health and great spirit amongst the men, with their being led on by General Burgoyne, who was universally esteemed and respected, could ensure success.”<sup>3</sup> It was a case of love at first sight between

<sup>1</sup> “In this trying and difficult situation the Governor endeavoured to show that resentment could not warp him from his duty; and he applied himself with the same diligence and energy to forward by every possible means, and to support in all its parts, the expedition, as if the arrangements were entirely his own.” “History of Europe”; *Annual Register* for 1777; chapter 8.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Edward Barrington de Fonblanque's *Biography of the Right Hon. General John Burgoyne*; pages 15 to 22. The whole passage should be studied. It is full of interest and instruction.

<sup>3</sup> *Travels through the Interior Parts of America; in a Series of Letters by an Officer*. London, MDCCXCI. The dedication, addressed to the Earl of Harrington, is signed by Lieutenant Thomas Anburey. To judge from internal evidence, it is probable that those letters which are dated during the advance on Saratoga were written at a subsequent period. But the narrative is in a high degree authentic.

Burgoyne and his army; and the pride and devotion with which his followers regarded him increased with closer knowledge, stood proof under the test of danger and toil, and survived even after they had all been subjected together to the last extremity of malignant fortune.

Burgoyne's troops had the sterling qualities of our national infantry, and, in an aggravated form, what was then the most serious of its defects; for there was not nearly enough of them. The British numbered a little more than four thousand rank and file. At that epoch the soldiers in any group of regiments, taken at random from the English army-list, were sure to be courageous and hardy as the sea is salt; and Burgoyne's troops were no chance medley of hastily collected battalions. The task which they had now to perform had been half done the year before, and had been left incomplete under circumstances which piqued, but in no sense cooled or diminished, their ardour and self-confidence. They had worked in concert; and they all knew their parts like a troop of actors in a piece which has been rehearsed. They were led by men who had been selected on the ground of tried and acknowledged professional merit. One of Burgoyne's three brigades was commanded by Colonel Simon Fraser, who had been wounded in battle long before he came of age, and had served with Wolfe at Louisburg and at Quebec. Another brigade of infantry was very judiciously entrusted to General Phillips, — than whom it may well be doubted whether a better artillery officer, in quarters or in the field, ever held a commission; and Phillips was likewise in charge of a train of ordnance comprising thirty-eight field-pieces and sixteen heavy guns.<sup>1</sup>

The battalions of Light Infantry and Grenadiers

<sup>1</sup> The employment of artillery officers in the command of infantry brigades was at that time contrary to regulation. Burgoyne defended himself for having gone outside the rule by a statement that the service would be injured "to the most material degree if the talents of General Phillips were not suffered to extend beyond the artillery." De Fonblanque's *Life of Burgoyne*; Appendix D, page 189.

were pronounced by an eye witness to be such a body of men as "could not be raised in a twelvemonth, search England through." Lord Balcarras, who united long military experience to full physical vigour, — for he had spent in the army twenty of the five-and-thirty years which he had lived in the world, — was Colonel of the Light Infantry; and the Grenadiers were placed under the command of John Dyke Acland, the kind of leader whom our soldiers have always been very willing to follow. He was the heir apparent of the greatest family of English land-owners who have consented to remain Commoners. Belonging to a class which then monopolised all the chances, he entered the service as Ensign in the spring of 1774, and he became Major in the early winter of 1775. He was in Parliament as a matter of course; but all the county-seats in the districts with which his father was connected were already occupied by his elders, and he sate for a Cornish borough. His wife was a daughter of the first Lord Ilchester; and he thus became cousin by marriage to Charles Fox. The two young fellows were political antagonists, and something of rivals; and they knew so very much about each other's frailties and shortcomings that their frequent exchanges of eloquent discourtesies were never deficient in point, and were keenly relished by the House of Commons. Acland, (as had once been the case with Fox,) was a Ministerialist with whose presence and patronage Ministers would very gladly have dispensed; and he was viewed with mingled feelings by his Sovereign. George the Third, while applauding his zeal for the Prerogative, instinctively recognised in him the sort of Tory who would almost infallibly turn into a Whig at the age when his support began to be really worth having. Whenever Lord North displayed any symptoms of a friendlier spirit towards the rebellious colonists, Acland was always at hand to lead a mutiny; and in his speeches he habitually assailed the Americans with every accusation under the sun except the charge of cowardice. That taunt he left

for the use of orators and pamphleteers who were less ready than himself to draw sword for their opinions. His manners were bluff and downright, of the country rather than the town; but he had a noble nature, and his faults were those which do not alienate affection. His wife accompanied him to Canada, and followed him on the march. She was endowed with what the third Lord Holland called "the Fox temper," and with all the Fox charm of mind and manner. Lady Harriet became a universal favourite with the officers of Acland's regiment, who, under her gentle sway, were enlivened and refined by home influences, and, (so far as she and her husband could provide them,) well supplied with home comforts.<sup>1</sup>

The rest of Burgoyne's force, outside his British regiments, was of heterogeneous origin and most uncertain quality. He had expected great things from the Canadian militia, who in former wars had marched out to support the French army with much docility, and in considerable numbers. But the British rule was popular in Canada mainly because the inhabitants were no longer liable to be called away from their farming and fishing in order to fight against King George; and, now that they were asked to fight for him, only seven or eight score of them appeared in arms. Burgoyne's command included more than three thousand Germans, who were mostly Brunswickers. That was an honourable name in military annals; but the soldiers whom the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick had so often led to victory during the Seven Years' War were very different from the throng of recruits whom, in March 1776, he shipped for England at thirty

<sup>1</sup> "I was much pleased at a little *politesse* of that amiable woman, Lady Harriet Acland. Exclusive of the excellent qualities that had already endeared her to the officers of the grenadiers, she thought proper to express a sense of their attention to her, (and who could be inattentive?) by some little present. So a few days before the officers took the field, she sent each of them, (thirty in number,) half a large Cheshire cheese; which was no such small present as you may imagine, English cheese being then a dollar per pound." *Travels through the Interior Parts of America*; Letter XVIII.



crowns a head. The majority of them had been swept into the ranks by wholesale conscription; and the most productive haul of the net was said to have been made on a certain Sunday, when gangs of crimps simultaneously beset every place of worship throughout the Duchy. That story was current in the British army, and found ready credence with those among our officers who were cantoned with the Germans in Canada. The intelligent and experienced English colonels who went down from London to Portsmouth, for the purpose of mustering the Brunswick contingent into King George's service, had reported that a very large proportion of the privates were either half-grown lads or elderly civilians.<sup>1</sup> Of the captains, and the subalterns, many were broken-down veterans, brought out of retirement by the threat of losing their half-pay if they showed themselves recalcitrant; and some even among the ensigns were too old for the evolutions of a field-day, and far too old for the backwoods. The troops had been sent from Brunswick so badly clothed and shod that, when they reached our shores, a new outfit had to be procured for them at the expense of the British Treasury; and, even then, they sailed for North America with no overcoats.

Those of them who were parents and householders suffered miserably from home-sickness during the dreary Canadian winter; and their dejection preyed upon their health to an extent that attracted the observation, and excited the pity, of their British comrades.<sup>2</sup>

Burgoyne's Germans had the good fortune to be under the fatherly care of an excellent officer. Baron

<sup>1</sup> Lowell's *Hessians*; Chapter 9. Letter from Colonel Harcourt of April 3, 1776. *Travels through the Interior Parts of America*; Letter LXIX.

<sup>2</sup> "The Germans, to the number of twenty and thirty at a time, will in their conversation relate to each other that they are sure that they shall not live to see home again, and are certain that they shall very soon die. Nor can any medicine or advice you can give them divert this settled superstition, which they as surely die martyrs to as ever it affects them. . . . This is a circumstance well known to every one in the army." *Travels through the Interior Parts of America*; Letter of January 28th, 1777.



Friedrich Adolph von Riedesel possessed the homely virtues, the frugal orderly habits, and the scrupulous, if not very enlightened, sense of duty, which then were often to be found among noble families in the smaller German States. A Hessian by birth, and a soldier from boyhood, he had transferred himself to the Brunswick service, where he was honoured by the approval, and advanced by the favour, of Prince Ferdinand. General Riedesel was a punctual and a painstaking officer; but his military reputation, if left to itself, would not have outlasted his lifetime; and he is known to posterity, respectably enough, as the husband of his wife. The Letters and Journals of Madame Riedesel, in their original form, and still more in the English translation, are, and will long remain, a standard work. Her book portrays British and German manners of four generations ago with native skill, and an agreeable absence of literary pretension or affectation, marred by a taste for reckless, and sometimes rather malicious, gossip; and she has drawn a vivid, and exceedingly unvarnished, picture of town and country life in the interior districts of the revolted colonies, where the poor lady's hard fate compelled her to make a very protracted sojourn. To her and Lady Harriet Acland, — and to a worthy lieutenant who published a narrative of the campaign in the shape of seventy-nine epistles to his friends in England, — the world is indebted for an intimate acquaintance with what may be called the domestic history of Burgoyne's expedition. Madame Riedesel left her home three months after the General's departure; passed the winter in London; and rejoined her husband near Montreal, in June 1777, a very few days before the army marched. Riedesel had written to his wife regularly all the while their separation lasted; and his letters treated of many topics. He discoursed on the dangers of the ocean; the climate and scenery of Canada; the health and conduct of his soldiers; his own opportunities for religious worship and meditation; and the defects or conveniences of the quarters which he succe-

sively occupied. He descanted, with never-failing interest, and impressive gravity, on his dinners and suppers, on the quality of the viands, the peculiarities of the cooking, and the market-price, (when he could manage to ascertain it,) of every article of food and drink which was set before him. But nowhere in his correspondence was there any reference whatever to the merits of the dispute in which he was engaged as a combatant. It apparently had not crossed his mind to inquire on which side of the quarrel justice lay, and why he himself had come to America with the object of killing people who had never wronged his own country or his own Sovereign.

In an unfortunate hour, and in spite of Sir Guy Carleton's earnest and reiterated protests, the Cabinet had insisted that the invading force should be attended by a strong party of Indian warriors. Five hundred of them obeyed the summons; actuated, (it is not uncharitable to believe,) by no settled conviction with regard to the fiscal or constitutional questions at issue between Congress and the Parliament at Westminster. They were allured into the British camp by the prospect of getting as much rum as they cared to drink, and by the more ideal ambition of obtaining scalps to decorate their wigwams; for they set greater store on these horrible ornaments than did Cornwallis on the blue ribbon which he wore with reluctance, or Burgoyne on the red ribbon which he could never be prevailed on to accept.<sup>1</sup> Lord North and his colleagues were not acting in ignorance; inasmuch as a very recent incident had thrown a glaring light on the true nature of Indian warfare. In the course of the previous year, at the battle of The Cedars on the Canadian frontier, a considerable number of New Hampshire militiamen had surrendered to the

<sup>1</sup> "At one of the Indian encampments," Lieutenant Anburey writes, "I saw several scalps hanging upon poles, in front of their wigwams. One of them had remarkably fine long hair hanging to it. An officer that was with me wanted to purchase it, at which the Indian seemed highly offended; nor would he part with this barbarous trophy, although he was offered so strong a temptation as a bottle of rum."

British commander on a distinct understanding that they would be protected from his Indian friends. But the red men could not be restrained. They scalped all the wounded Americans; roasted one of the prisoners alive; murdered seven or eight of the others; and carried off the survivors into the recesses of the woods.<sup>1</sup> No civilised official, however honest and resolute, could maintain any effective control over the wayward minds and unbridled appetites of the savages; and that truth was daily, and most disagreeably, brought home to the unlucky gentleman who held the post of Indian Superintendent.<sup>2</sup>

The possession by a warrior of a scalp, and even of many scalps, was no real indication of his personal valour. An Indian brave, whose tribe had assisted the French or the English in their struggle for the Mississippi Valley, took credit for the heads of hair which he tore from the soldiers who had been killed or disabled by their European adversaries in fair stand-up conflict. The flaxen curls of childhood, and the white locks of helpless old age, all counted as legitimate trophies; and the long tresses of a woman were held in special value. The literary legend of the noble savage was not yet in vogue, and it would assuredly have found very sceptical readers in the officers of General Burgoyne's army. Any illusions which a subaltern, fresh from England, might have entertained about Indian chivalry and fidelity were dispelled weeks before the expedition arrived on the upper waters of the Hudson River. As fighting men, during the whole of the Saratoga campaign, our Wyandots and Algonquins were a great deal

<sup>1</sup> *American Archives*. Washington to the President of Congress; 15 July, 1776.

<sup>2</sup> "A few days since I was invited to dine with Captain Frazer, who is superintendent over the Indians. We had scarcely drank five glasses when the Indians returned, upon a pretence of business to him, which was no other than that of procuring more rum; which Captain Frazer refusing them, they grew extremely troublesome, and, with the liquor they had already drank, were much beyond any control. They paid no attention to Captain Frazer, who, finding he could not pacify or in any way get rid of them, made us an apology, and the company broke up." The above passage occurs in Lieutenant Anburey's nineteenth letter.

worse than useless. More than one promising combination for surrounding and surprising the enemy was ruined by their premature appearance on the scene of action, and their disorderly flight when the firing began in earnest.<sup>1</sup> And when a success had been gained, and the English regiments advanced to occupy the hostile position, our soldiers were shocked by the sight of living forms, hideously disfigured, writhing in agony on the ground; for the scalp-hunters, who had been invisible during the heat of the combat, always contrived to slip through to the front as soon as ever the danger ended.

The presence of the red man in Burgoyne's ranks was defended in the House of Commons on the plea that the same thing had been done before. Precedents were discovered in the Iroquois who co-operated with Montcalm, and the Oneidas who in 1758 helped Bradstreet to capture the stronghold of Frontenac on Lake Ontario. Those precedents were not in point. The French and the English governments had more than once accepted Indian aid against the regular armies of a foreign enemy; but that case was very different from the employment of savages for the purpose of reducing to obedience the population of thickly inhabited and industrial districts. In the campaigns of the French wars the antagonists of the Indians were professional soldiers who had marched into the desert armed for attack and defence, and who were prepared manfully to encounter all the perils and misadventures which might befall them in the pursuit of their military duties. The battles, moreover, which decided those campaigns were fought in the very heart of the Indian country; and Cherokees and Hurons would under any circumstances have flocked uninvited to the field of carnage as instinctively, and in almost as great numbers, as the carrion-crows and the wolves. But Connecticut and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Guy Carleton was thoroughly acquainted with the military value of the Indians. "They were easily dejected," he said, "and chose to be of the strongest side; so that, when they were the most wanted, they vanished."

Massachusetts, and the Eastern townships of New York State and of Pennsylvania, were not heathen wildernesses, but well-to-do and well-ordered Christian communities. New England, in particular, was a region of assured prosperity and ancient peace, where the memory of the old Indian raids had long been a faint, and almost meaningless, tradition. Many years had rolled away since the boldest savages had ventured to show themselves in their war-paint within a hundred miles of New Haven or of Boston. But now they were coming in hundreds,—and with thousands to follow,—in the wake of an invading British army; and the tomahawk, the torch, and the scalping-knife would very soon be at work in farmhouse and village throughout tracts of country which for generations past had been as secure from such a visitation as Westmorland, or Kent, or Worcestershire.

A course of action which could lead to such results need not be treated from the point of view of ethics; for it is sufficiently condemned on the ground of its monstrous impolicy. The British army, small as it was, would have done better without any of its auxiliaries; for the strength which they contributed was more than neutralised by the resistance which they provoked. Lord George Germaine, when he framed his plan of operations, apparently forgot that the New England provinces lay close up to Burgoyne's flank along the whole extent of his slender and unguarded line of march. Those provinces, the cradle and citadel of the revolt, swarmed with men who had some experience in war, and much skill with their weapon. Their tastes were pacific, and they required a very strong motive to draw them into the field; but that motive would be supplied by the knowledge that a powerful column of German infantry, and a long file of hostile Indians, were travelling day after day, for months together, within a few miles of their own borders. The American minute-man, in open fight, was not the least afraid of either the Indians or the Germans; but Germans and



Indians were the very last people in the world whom he would wish to see in the immediate neighbourhood of his home and his family. An aggressive movement of the British forces, in the company of such allies, was a menace and a challenge to New England; and, if once New England were fairly roused, Burgoyne's communications with Canada would be cut within the twenty-four hours, and, before another week had elapsed, the safety of his whole force would be in deadly jeopardy. But Cabinet Ministers in London had talked themselves and each other, and had tried to talk Parliament, into a belief that every New Englander was a born poltroon, whose forefathers, when they sailed for America, had left the courage of their race behind them. Germaine's moral obtuseness on this vital point, combined with his portentous blunders in strategy, had prepared a bad future for the gallant British cohorts which went forth to battle under his ill-omened auspices.

As if the rebellious colonies were not sufficiently alive to the prospective horrors of an Indian raid, Burgoyne himself, of his own motion, gave those horrors the loudest possible advertisement. With characteristic avidity he seized an opportunity for making an oration as soon as he had crossed the frontier, and got beyond the hearing of Sir Guy Carleton. On the twenty-third of June, 1777, he conveyed to the assembled Indians, in glowing terms, the satisfaction and gratitude which their conduct had evoked in King George's mind. He praised their ardour to vindicate the authority of the Parent whom they loved, and the constraint which they had put upon their resentment in waiting for their Father's call to arms. "Emulous in glory and in friendship," he exclaimed, "we will endeavour reciprocally to give and to receive examples. *We* will strive to imitate *your* perseverance in enterprise, and your constancy to resist hunger, weariness, and pain; and, in return, it will be our task to point out where it is nobler to spare



than to revenge, — to discriminate degrees of guilt, to chastise and not to destroy." In former wars, (the orator went on to say,) Indians had held themselves entitled to extirpate wherever they came; but during this expedition they must scrupulously obey the rules of civilised warfare, and the dictates of the Christian religion. In conformity with their customs they would be allowed to take scalps from the slain, but not from the wounded, nor even from the dying; and aged men, women, children, and prisoners were to be held sacred from the knife and the hatchet. Within those limits, and under these reservations, they might give full scope to their outraged loyalty and their righteous indignation. "Warriors!" Burgoyne exclaimed, "you are free! Go forth in the might and valour of your cause! Strike at the common enemies of Great Britain and America; — the disturbers of public order, peace, and happiness; the destroyers of commerce; the parricides of the State!" The General's audience relished his perorations, of which there were several in the course of the speech; and the style of his address, as transmitted through the mouth of an official interpreter, was a flattering imitation of the rhetoric employed in their own palavers. The duty of reply devolved upon an old Iroquois chief, who, determined not to be outdone in the practice of his national art by a stranger and a pale-face, assured Burgoyne that the warriors there present recognised in his accents the voice of their common Father beyond the Great Lake, and that their hatchets had been sharpened on the whet-stone of their filial affections.

Burgoyne transmitted to England a full and faithful report of these proceedings, which was very ill received by London society. His speech to the Indians shocked humane and homely people; and the least fastidious man of the world did not care to be publicly reminded that the English army was assisted by allies with whom our Government kept a running account for scalps, and who required to be solemnly and specifically warned

against the practice of murdering and mutilating children and women. The same packet carried home copies of a proclamation which Burgoyne addressed from his camp before Ticonderoga to the inhabitants of the revolted colonies. His parliamentary colleagues, — who knew, and did not like, his style of rhetoric, — had already detected his hand in State Papers which professed to come from General Gage's pen.<sup>1</sup> Burgoyne, now that he himself was in command, seemed determined that there should be no mistake about the authorship of his own manifesto; for it was prefaced by a pompous list of his titles and employments which must have sounded exquisitely absurd when declaimed by George Selwyn from the hearth-rug at Brooks's Club. The threats of condign vengeance, set forth in the last two paragraphs, were regarded by all rational statesmen as monstrously impolitic;<sup>2</sup> and the whole composition was a mass of inflated and over-polished verbiage of the sort which always, and never more than in Burgoyne's own generation, has been repugnant to the English taste. "Have you," (said Horace Walpole,) "read Burgoyne's rhodomontade, in which he almost promises to cross America in a hop, step, and a jump? He has sent over, too, a copy of his talk with the Indians, which they say is still more supernatural.

<sup>1</sup> George Germaine to General Irwin; July 26, 1775. *The Drayton House Manuscripts*; Page 136.

<sup>2</sup> "In consciousness of Christianity, my Royal Master's clemency, and the honour of soldiership, I have dwelt upon this invitation, and wished for more persuasive terms to give it impression. And let not the people be led to disregard it by considering their distance from the immediate situation of my camp! I have but to give stretch to the Indian forces under my direction, (and they amount to thousands,) to overtake the hardened enemies of Great Britain and America; and I consider them the same, wherever they may lurk."

"If notwithstanding these endeavours, and sincere inclinations, the frenzy of hostility should remain, I trust I shall stand acquitted in the eyes of God and men in denouncing and executing the vengeance of the State against the wilful outcasts. The messengers of justice and wrath await them in the field; and devastation, famine, and every concomitant horror that a reluctant but indispensable prosecution of military duty must occasion, will bar the way to their return."

I own I prefer General Howe's taciturnity, who at least, if he does nothing, does not break his word."<sup>1</sup> That was the opinion very generally held by men who could recall the brief and bluff terms in which Lord Chatham's commanders on sea and land, — after a battle, but not before it, — were accustomed to announce their victories; and whose grandfathers had known nothing about the projected movement against the lines at Blenheim until they were informed by the Duke of Marlborough that Monsieur Tallard, and two other French generals, were sitting in his coach.

Burgoyne's proclamation was, of course, even worse liked by Americans than by Englishmen; and in America his unlucky production fell into adroit and merciless hands. Francis Hopkinson had been sent from the Jerseys as a delegate to Congress; and he eventually mounted the Judicial Bench. A sturdy Revolutionist, he was less a politician or a lawyer than a man of letters, with a passion for modelling his style upon the British classics. He began with pretty trifles in the manner of Herrick and Withers; his sea-ballads and hunting songs have all a far-away echo of ancient and very familiar strains; and, when he first took to prose, he caught the spirit of the shorter pieces that emanated from the pens of Swift and Arbuthnot. The time now arrived when this talent for imitation became of real service to the political cause which Francis Hopkinson had espoused; for he dashed off, and put into circulation, a burlesque reply to the English general's proclamation. That clever and biting parody pursued the original manifesto all over the Confederacy, and had the double effect of making Americans very angry, and exceedingly contemptuous of Burgoyne's long-winded menaces.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horace Walpole to the Countess of Ossory; Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Tyler remarks that Francis Hopkinson's satire everywhere excited roars of laughter "over a situation in which there was much to give alarm, but with respect to which mere laughter was an antidote to popular panic." *Literary History of the American Revolution*; Chapter XXX.

The troops of the Royal army were well furnished at all points, and united in willing obedience to their leader; but in the opposite camp there was confusion, improvidence, dissension, and mutual distrust. During the year 1777, and the first six months of 1778, while military operations of cardinal importance to the destiny of America were in progress, the American government was passing through a political and administrative crisis of a nature which has seldom failed to occur, sooner or later, in the course of every great revolutionary struggle in modern or ancient times. The question at issue was the claim of the politicians to appoint and remove the generals, and to control the war; and the circumstances under which that claim was raised, pursued, and finally set at rest, supply a great deal of unedifying, and rather disagreeable, reading. The dispute was fought out within the walls of Congress amidst much ill-feeling, and some indifference to the laws of honour. Disproportioned ambitions, and ignoble rivalries, too frequently ruled the hour. But those sentiments exhaled themselves in debates across the floor, and cabals in the Committee-rooms; and in captious, and occasionally somewhat vulgar-minded, letters which certain distinguished statesmen had much better have left unwritten. America contrived to get through her difficulties without the rioting, the bloodshed, and the violations of the ordinary law, which have prevailed at similar conjunctures in the history of other famous countries. Philadelphia, at the very height of the controversy, was a much quieter city than the London of 1648 and 1653, or than Paris in the Reign of Terror. There was no brawling in her streets; no proscriptions, or judicial murders; no suspension of the civil constitution by the armed hand of the soldier. The successful and peaceable solution of the problem was primarily due to the calm self-control, and the patient tenacity of purpose, which were exhibited by George Washington; and yet even those qualities would have failed of

their effect if there had not been plenty of good sense and sterling patriotism in the community at large.

The view of the politicians was very emphatically stated by Doctor Benjamin Rush, a delegate from Pennsylvania. "I have heard," said Rush, "the Congress called a Republic. I love to realise the idea, and I hope it will inspire us with the virtuous principles of Republican Governments. One of the most powerful and happy commonwealths in the world, Rome, called her general officers from the plough, and paid no regard to rank, service, or seniority. The case is different with us. A general may lose a battle or a province, and we possess no power to recall or to displace him."<sup>1</sup> That speech was an oblique stroke at the Commander-in-Chief, who had all along been a mark for civilian jealousy. But the lustre of Trenton was not as yet dimmed by failure or defeat; and Washington, for some while to come, remained too strong to be directly and personally assailed. The brunt of the attack was concentrated on a more defenceless head.

The Northern department, of which Albany was the military capital, had from the first been under the command of Major General Philip Schuyler. Schuyler's valour and conduct, while he was still a young captain of militia, met with signal recognition on more than one memorable occasion. In September 1755, when the colonists had gained their brilliant and unassisted victory on the banks of Lake George, he was sent home in charge of the French prisoners; and, after General Abercromby's defeat at Ticonderoga, he was chosen for the melancholy and honourable duty of conveying Viscount Howe's body to Albany for burial. But his health failed early in life; and, by the time the Revolutionary War broke out, he was able to take the field only during short, and very uncertain, intervals. In the capacity of a military administrator, however, though less able and experienced than Washington, he

<sup>1</sup> Debate of February 19, 1777. *Historical Notes of Dr. Benjamin Rush*, extracted from his Note-book by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell: 1903.



was as industrious and unselfish as the Commander-in-Chief himself. Schuyler loved his country sincerely and singly, and he gave her the whole of his time and strength, besides great quantities of his money, and, (for many years together,) all his peace of mind and his happiness. He was fiercely calumniated while alive, and since his death he has met with some unfair treatment at the hand of history; but his good fame has survived all assaults, whether contemporaneous or posthumous; and he now is almost universally recognised as an honest and devoted friend to America.

Schuyler had the supreme misfortune of being heartily disliked in Boston; and a statesman or a general of the Revolution, who was out of favour with the Bostonians, had as small a chance of making a good figure in history as an Anglo-Saxon or Plantagenet monarch who had offended the clergy and the monastic chroniclers. The quarrel was of old date. For many years before the American Revolution the governments of New York, and of Massachusetts Bay, had been engaged in an angry controversy over their respective rights to the territory which is now Vermont, and which then was known by the title of "The Hampshire Grants." On more than one occasion very high-handed action was taken by the authorities of New York; and Schuyler, as the leading citizen in that colony, became identified with proceedings which the whole of New England rightly condemned as unjust and tyrannical.<sup>1</sup> When the Revolutionary War commenced, the standing antipathy between the Northern and the Middle provinces soon made itself felt in Schuyler's ranks. Massachusetts and Connecticut, — thickly peopled, and situated near at hand, — formed a natural source of supply, whence the army stationed at Albany drew most of its reinforcements; but the General, and the great majority of his soldiers, were

<sup>1</sup> *Life of General Philip Schuyler*, by Bayard Tuckerman; Chapter 3. *The Life and Times of Philip Schuyler*, by Benson J. Lossing, LL.D.; Chapter 12.



prejudiced against each other from the outset, and a more intimate acquaintance only served to embitter their relations. They eyed him with suspicion as an aristocrat; and, from the intellectual elevation of born New Englanders, they looked down on him as a slow-witted Dutchman. He, on his side, held them in poor esteem as bad drills and great talkers, devoid of any germ of deference for social rank, and incapable of military discipline and subordination.<sup>1</sup> Schuyler confided his troubles to Washington, who gave him both sympathy and wise counsel in a series of noble letters, which are written for all time, and may still be read with comfort and advantage by any servant of the public whose burden, for the moment, seems to him heavier than he can bear.<sup>2</sup> The seed, in this case, fell upon good soil. "I can easily conceive," (such was Schuyler's answer,) "that my difficulties are only a faint semblance of yours. Yes, my General, I will try to copy your bright example, and patiently and steadily persevere in that line which alone can promise the wished-for reformation."

Schuyler's expressions of regret were genuine, and his pledge of amendment was faithfully kept; but the people who were at variance with him did not come of a repenting, or a quickly forgiving, race. The New England militia repaired to his assistance tardily and reluctantly; when they arrived in camp they minded their duties little, and their manners less; and they went back to their homes in crowds without any regard for the requirements of the service, and on very flimsy pretexts.<sup>3</sup> The New England delegates to the Congress

<sup>1</sup> The case is impartially handled by a conscientious and fair-minded New Englander, the chaplain to a regiment of Connecticut militia. A passage from his correspondence, which deserves reading, has been given in the First Appendix to this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Washington to Schuyler; Cambridge, 5th and 24th December, 1775. A fine extract from a third letter is quoted in the fourth chapter of Tuckerman's *Life of Schuyler*.

<sup>3</sup> "Nothing," wrote Schuyler, "can surpass the impatience of the troops from the New England colonies to get to their fire-sides. Near

at Philadelphia, (and in the long run that proved to be a serious matter for Schuyler,) were his ill-wishers and detractors almost to a man. Those delegates were the main strength of the anti-military party which Samuel Adams led, and which John Adams, with many self-questionings, fitfully supported. The better people among them, when they thwarted and hampered General Schuyler, justified themselves by the theory that they were asserting their own legitimate authority over the army and its chiefs; but the meaner spirits were perfectly well aware that, under the guise of concern for the public interests, they were satiating a personal grudge. They discovered an apt instrument for their purpose in a man who is unfavourably remembered by all patriotic Americans, because he was the centre of mischievous intrigues, and the hero of shabby scandals, which constitute the most unseemly and notorious episode in the story of their national Revolution.

Crown Point had already been recovered by the British arms, and Ticonderoga was now the frontier fortress of the rebellion. The garrison was commanded by Major-General Horatio Gates, — as garrisons are commanded by an officer who seldom, or never, can find leisure to be at his post. Gates was qualified by nature to make his way, fast and far, in any profession where advancement goes by favour. He has been truly described as "comely in person, mild in disposition, and courteous in manner, except when roused to anger or influenced by spite, when he sometimes became very violent."<sup>1</sup> Under a European monarchy he would have been assiduous in his attendance at the levee and in the ante-chamber; and, in a Congress-governed nation, he was a soldier of the lobby rather than of the skirmish-line. During that

three hundred of them arrived a few days ago, unable to do any duty; but as soon as I administered that grand specific, a discharge, they instantly acquired health; and, rather than be detained a few days to cross Lake George, they undertook a march from here of two hundred miles with the greatest alacrity."

<sup>1</sup> *The American Revolution*, by John Fiske; Chapter 6.

war of small, and often half-trained, armies, fighting up and down a wild and broken country, the leaders on both sides made it a point of honour to set an example of personal valour, and, (in case of need,) even of headlong audacity. Cornwallis and Percy, Arnold, Stark, and Washington never spared themselves in action; but it is credibly stated that Gates, throughout the whole of his Northern campaign, did not so much as hear a bullet whistle. During the siege of Boston, Gates was Adjutant General in the camp at Cambridge; and he used his opportunities; for he was at great pains to ingratiate himself with the New England officers and soldiers, and he established an intimate, and most profitable, alliance with New England politicians. Congress elected him a Major General: and in June 1776 he was sent to the Northern frontier as second in authority under General Schuyler. As soon as Gates was installed at Ticonderoga he set himself deliberately down to the business of undermining, overthrowing, and supplanting his superior officer. For three months to come he despatched by every post very private letters addressed to New England members of Congress, filled with charges and innuendoes against his chief, and with artful allusions to the popularity which he himself enjoyed among those intelligent and liberty-loving New England militia-men who were so acute in discriminating between a bad and a good commander. When November arrived, he applied for leave of absence on the plea of weak health, and followed his own correspondence to Baltimore, where Congress then was sitting.

In the course of his journey he reached the banks of the Delaware River, and there fell in with an unexpected and unique opportunity of proving his worth as a valiant soldier. Washington, surprised, but heartily pleased, when a full Major General dropped from the clouds into his camp at the critical instant of the campaign, invited his guest to lead the right-hand column in the attack upon the Hessians at Trenton. It was a chance for which Anthony Wayne, who was left in care of the sick and starving troops at Ticonderoga through

the whole of that cruel winter, would have given ten years of his life, and his pay for ever.<sup>1</sup> But Gates had come South to fight his own battles, and no others. He declined to give Washington the benefit of his assistance; he pushed on for Baltimore; and two months afterwards he obsequiously followed Congress back to Philadelphia. In both cities he worked pertinaciously and insidiously; urging his own claims, and inspiring a course of action against General Schuyler which did not stop short of downright persecution. Gates at length received the reward of his importunity; for he was ordered by a Resolution of Congress to go immediately to Ticonderoga, and there to assume independent command of the field-army.

That vote was resented by Schuyler as a slight on his services, and a stain upon his character; and his cause was warmly and loyally espoused by the citizens of his native State. The New York Convention, then and there, elected him a delegate to Congress, where he rose in his place to insist upon a public and official inquiry into the whole of his past conduct. An honest man, who has suffered an unmerited injury, is his own best advocate. Schuyler's dignified attitude, and plainly told story, made a deep impression on his senatorial colleagues; his merits were handsomely acknowledged; and he was once again definitely invested with absolute military control over the entire Northern department. He repaired to his province with all possible haste; but six months of invaluable time had been consumed in these barren wrangles. June had come; and, before that month ended, Burgoyne's advance-guard was already within a few miles of the American out-posts. Schuyler, and his staff-officers, were sadly behindhand with their work at the base of operations; and at Ticonderoga, in the extreme front, all the arrangements for the reception of an enemy were in utter and hope-

<sup>1</sup> The relative estimate in which Wayne held money, and military glory, was well-known to his contemporaries. Long after this date John Adams saw him upon his return from a successful warlike operation. "This man's feelings," he wrote, "must be worth a guinea a minute."

less disorder and neglect. For General Gates, when he left Philadelphia in triumph at the close of March, had returned towards, but not to, his post of duty ; and he still was lingering at Albany when the news reached him that the Central Government had gone back upon its previous decision, and that Schuyler was again his commanding officer. He at once threw patriotism to the winds, and posted off to Congress, boiling with indignation, and intent upon calling the faithless Assembly to account for his disappointed hopes, whatever might be the consequences to his own career, or to the safety of his threatened country.

It was a sordid and repulsive story ; but an author who kept it in the back-ground of his narrative would be no true historian of the American Revolution. The ugliest feature in the whole business was the indifference displayed by General Gates to the misery of his soldiers. While he was cajoling influential politicians in the warmer latitude of Baltimore, the men whom he had left behind him on the frost-bound shores of Lake Champlain were in a forlorn and wretched plight. The small-pox, which they brought back with them from Canada, had never been eradicated ; dysentery was in all their quarters ; and pulmonary diseases were prevalent under such conditions of want, and exposure, that an attack of pneumonia was a sentence of death. The national treasury was so nearly empty, and the contents of the national magazines had run so low, that troops, whose commander did not press their claims hotly and persistently, were sure to come off very badly in the competition for money and supplies. If Benedict Arnold had been in the place of Horatio Gates, the garrison under his charge would have got the best of what was producible, poor and scanty as that best might be. But the unfortunate people at Ticonderoga, with no one to champion their interests, had "nothing but flour and bad beef, with no beds or bedding for the



sick to lie on or under, other than their own clothes ;”<sup>1</sup> and in that sorrowful camp the sick outnumbered the hale. Nine hundred pairs of shoes, and no more, were served out in the course of the winter ; and a third part of the army was doing duty barefoot with a thermometer below zero. “ It cannot,” (so a trustworthy eye witness passionately declared,) “ be viewed in a milder light than black murder. The poor creatures are now, (what’s left alive,) laying on the cold ground in poor thin tents, and some none at all, and many down with pleurisy. I paid a visit to the sick yesterday to a small house called the hospital. The first object presented to my eyes was one man laying dead at the door ; then, inside, two more dead, with two living between them.”<sup>2</sup> So matters stood at the close of November ; and, when May arrived, there was still no improvement or increase in the daily ration ; no medical remedies except the approach of more genial weather ; and no reinforcements for an army which by this time had dwindled to the proportions of a handful. Nothing remained except the fag-end of that assemblage of regiments which had gone through two unsuccessful campaigns, two severe winters, and a whole series of deadly epidemics.

Schuyler, at the eleventh hour, did his utmost to repair the negligences of the past ; but the season for preparation was drawing to a close, and the enemy was already at the gate. He resumed his functions at Albany on the eighth of June ; and on the fifteenth of the same month he learned from a captured British spy that Burgoyne’s army was concentrated on the frontier, and that Seneca warriors and Tory partisans were mustering at the springs of the Mohawk River. The defence of Ticonderoga was committed to Major General St. Clair, the best of Schuyler’s Brigadiers ; if such a

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Anthony Wayne to the Council of Safety of Pennsylvania : December 4, 1776. “ Death,” he wrote ten days afterwards, “ is daily making dreadful havoc amongst us Pennsylvanians. I have buried out of my own Regiment, since you left this ground, upwards of fifty men.”

<sup>2</sup> Letter in *American Archives* of December 1776.



title could properly be given to officers each of whose brigades would have made a poor show beside the war strength of a European regiment. St. Clair had no light burden upon him; for the attention of every news-writer, on either side of the Atlantic, was fixed upon the stronghold for whose safety he was now responsible. Ticonderoga had a varied, and a most sensational, military record. In July 1758 it had been attacked by a large force of British regulars and colonial militia, rashly and clumsily led by General James Abercromby, who was a soldier of a very much inferior type to his namesake Ralph. Montcalm repulsed that force from before the walls with appalling slaughter; but the French were eventually frightened out of Ticonderoga by the advance of Lord Amherst at the head of one of those powerful and well-appointed armies with which, like a prudent commander, he always preferred to march. Early in the Revolution, just three weeks after Lexington, the fortress was surprised and captured, without a blow or a shot, by Ethan Allen;—under the special grace, (according to his own account,) of the Great Jehovah, and with the more mundane, but very effectual, co-operation of Benedict Arnold. The event caused an extraordinary outburst of pride and gratification throughout the entire Confederacy; and patriotic Americans thenceforward held it as an article of faith that Ticonderoga was impregnable against all assailants who were less enterprising, and less dear to Providence, than themselves.

Ticonderoga was situated on the Western shore of the fork where Lake Champlain branches Southward into two long and narrow gulfs. The contour of the ground and water closely resembled the lower end of Lake Como, and almost rivalled that classical district in beauty of scenery.<sup>1</sup> The Americans had diligently

<sup>1</sup> "Lake George is the most picturesque thing I saw in the United States. Three of our English Lakes, placed on end, would be something like it in extent and scenery." Herbert Spencer's *Autobiography*; Chapter 62. Lake George was the Westernmost of the three Southern branches.

applied themselves to extend, — and, as they fondly imagined, to strengthen, — the fortifications. The result of their labours conspicuously illustrated both the merits, and the faults, of their military engineering; for the work was admirably executed, and ignorantly planned. On the Eastern bank, immediately opposite Ticonderoga, they had erected an exceedingly elaborate citadel, on which they conferred their favourite, and not very distinctive, appellation of “Fort Independence.”<sup>1</sup> Across the breadth of the lake, between the two fortresses, they had built a bridge of vast span and solid fabric, overcoming with audacious ingenuity all the mechanical difficulties of their task. If such a work had been constructed by Julius Cæsar’s army, the description of it, to the distraction of modern schoolboys, would have filled whole chapters of his Commentaries. And yet all the trouble expended on Ticonderoga had been worse than wasted; for the circuit of the intrenchments was now so large as to require a garrison of ten thousand men. St. Clair’s troops, all told, — and many of them were not worth telling, — amounted to only a quarter of that number. Eight out of every nine of his privates were unprovided with bayonets; the disheartening effect of which circumstance on the defenders of a position, before the days of the breech-loader, could hardly be over-rated. And, again, the nature of the locality was such that a besieger, who kept his eyes about him, might have the place at his mercy without ever running the risks of an assault by storm. At the Northern point of the promontory, which divided the two branches of the lake, a rugged acclivity, then known as Sugar Hill, rose six hundred feet above the surface of the water. If Burgoyne’s heavy guns were planted on the summit, Ticonderoga would from that moment forward be untenable. A small redoubt on the top of the crag

<sup>1</sup> Within a twelvemonth of the Fourth of July, 1776, there already were no fewer than three important fortresses of that name on the line between Crown Point and Manhattan Island.

would have been worth, many times over, all the costly and pretentious additions that had recently been made to the defences of the neighbourhood ; but the American generals, after taking the matter into their consideration, had pronounced Sugar Hill inaccessible to artillery.

The mountain might have preserved that reputation until the end of time if the British general, and his principal advisers, had been less capable masters of their profession. The Royal fleet reached Crown Point towards the close of June ; our troops were disembarked ; our ships of war, small and great, were cleared for action ; and Ticonderoga, with all the outlying forts, was expeditiously, and most skilfully, invested both by land and water. Those splendid and easy successes, which almost immediately ensued, must be scored to the credit of Burgoyne himself ; although he generously confessed in his despatch that he had been greatly indebted to the zeal and ability of an officer who was already a celebrated veteran. The campaigns of the Peninsular War and of Waterloo, more recent and on a larger scale, have relegated to comparative obscurity many distinguished soldiers of the generation which preceded Wellington ; and, among those who have so suffered, very few are more worthy of remembrance than General William Phillips of the Royal Artillery. Oblivion, in his case, is a double injustice, because he was an honoured member of a branch of the service which always does its duty, and seldom meets with its deserts. Phillips was keenly alive to everything that concerned the interests, the renown, and the popularity of his corps. During peace he ruled with a light and steady hand ; and, in an age of duels and dissipation, the officers of the Royal Artillery lived together like a well-ordered family. His exploits in war were marked by striking originality of conception, and vivacious daring in execution. At Minden the valour of the British infantry would have been ill seconded by either of the auxiliary arms, had it not been for Captain Phillips ; for he remained a captain,

while Lord George Sackville was already a general. The story of his exertions, while he was bringing up the guns at that supreme moment, partakes of the mythical; for he was popularly believed to have broken a whole armful of walking-canes over the backs of his draught-horses. It would have been well if the stoutest of them had on that same day, in another quarter of the field, been vigorously applied to a certain pair of human shoulders. After the battle Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, exercising his privilege as a royal personage, requested the young artilleryman to accept a thousand crowns as a testimony of his admiration and his gratitude. All through the subsequent operations in Germany, Phillips made a point of showing that, however fast Lord Granby and his cavalry might travel, they never would leave the cannon far behind. He trotted the last five miles of road on the way to Warburg, and mended his pace as he swung his battery into a position where it exercised a decisive influence on the result of that fiery and impetuous conflict. It was the first occasion, according to both French and English authorities, when artillery had come into action at the gallop. And now, in the heart of the American wilderness, his chance had arrived for proving that he was as much at home in a siege as in a battle.<sup>1</sup>

Sugar Hill was carefully explored by Lieutenant Twiss, who was Burgoyne's Engineer in command, although a lieutenant still; for promotion then went by favour, and favour seldom smiled upon the working officer. Many years afterwards the place was visited by Benson Lossing, a pilgrim who never allowed himself to be turned back from any spot which figured in the history of the Revolution. He found the flank of the mountain such an agglomeration of broken rocks, —

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, in his *Frederic the Great*, makes honourable mention of Phillips; and there is much about him in many books which now are little read. Thorough justice is done to him, as to countless others, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

and so encumbered with fallen timber, and with a matted tangle of the creepers which in America are known by the generic name of vines, — that the difficulties of the ascent proved almost insuperable.<sup>1</sup> These obstacles, however, did not baffle or discourage Burgoyne's officer of Engineers; and, on his return, he promised that he and his sappers would undertake to make a road which, though no highway, would be good enough for General Phillips when it was a question of bringing artillery to the front. A day and a night were spent in fierce labour, and in honourable emulation between fatigue-parties from the various regiments; and, when morning broke, the British were in occupation of the summit. Our officers, from that coign of vantage, searched with their telescopes every angle of every hostile redoubt; noted whether its embrasures were armed with cannon; and counted its defenders, — which in no case was an affair of very many minutes. Both Fort Ticonderoga and Fort Independence lay within range of a plunging fire from the twenty-four pounders, and the eight-inch howitzers, with which the peak had been garnished. Phillips, then and there, rechristened his hill by the significant title of Mount Defiance; and the people of the United States, with their wonted respect for historical associations, have retained that name till this present hour.<sup>2</sup>

St. Clair had hitherto been in great heart, and in high spirits; for he entertained that delusive hope which, ever since Bunker's Hill, had been the cherished ideal of all American commanders. He looked forward to the opportunity of repelling a general assault, delivered in broad daylight up an open glacis, and of disabling the British army by the leisurely fire of his

<sup>1</sup> Benson Lossing's *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*; Volume I., Chapter 6.

<sup>2</sup> Anburey, in his thirty-third letter, says that Lieutenant Twiss "reported the hill to have the entire command of the works and buildings, both at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, at about fourteen hundred yards from the former, and fifteen hundred from the latter."



own marksmen from behind their secure intrenchments. On the thirtieth of June he assured Schuyler by letter that, if the enemy attacked Ticonderoga, they would go back faster than they came ;<sup>1</sup> but at dawn on the fifth of July he was called from his quarters to see the brow of the mountain glowing with scarlet uniforms, and the muzzles of siege-guns protruding over the edge of the platform. It was a poor awakening for an American general on the morrow of Independence Day. St. Clair discerned at a glance that the fortress in his charge was doomed, and that his own chance in life was gone. "To remain, would be to lose his army ; to retreat, would be to lose his character ;"<sup>2</sup> and it is to his praise that he adopted the honest and unselfish course, and pursued it with all the forethought and precaution which his desperate situation admitted. The slow day went by in enforced idleness, for every movement within the American camp was exposed to the full view of a watchful adversary ; but, so soon as night fell, the work of evacuation began in earnest. More than two hundred barges were laden with stores and baggage, and despatched up the Eastern branch of the lake, under the convoy of five armed galleys, the remnant of Benedict Arnold's ill-fated squadron. The troops on the Western shore were marched across to Fort Independence ; and then the united garrisons, undetected and unmolested, made good their retreat as far as Hubbardtown, which lay near twenty miles to the South of Ticonderoga.

The most had been made of the darkness ; but at sunrise the British were astir on land and lake. Burgoyne had inculcated upon those around him the necessity for vigilance and promptitude ; and his ex-

<sup>1</sup> On the same day one of Schuyler's aides-de-camp, who had been kept at Ticonderoga by sickness, wrote to his general as follows : "I cannot but esteem myself fortunate that indisposition prevented my returning with you, as it has given me an opportunity of being present at a battle in which I promise myself the pleasure of seeing our army flushed with victory."

<sup>2</sup> Lossing's *Life and Times of Philip Schuyler* ; Chapter 10.



hortations were obeyed when the hour for action came. The Americans had placed great reliance on the complicated and ponderous mass of impediments which blocked the channel between their two fortresses; and they set forth on their voyage in the firm belief that pursuit by water was impossible. They had forgotten how English seamen can work even when there are grape-shot and musketry to distract their attention; and on the present occasion our sailors had no worse danger to fear than a wetting, and no less powerful an incentive than the prospect of grappling with an enemy whom they had twice encountered with success, and whom they were resolved never again to dismiss half beaten. They cut through the protecting boom; they ascertained the position of two among the enormous sunken piers; they towed away one of the vast rafts which, by dint of incredible labour, had been chained and riveted together into a monumental bridge; and in half an hour they broke a passage through barriers which, (to employ Burgoyne's own words,) the Americans had been labouring for ten months to render impenetrable. The *Royal George* and the *Inflexible*, — a pair of ships which were of a size to be dignified with the rating of frigates, — moved proudly through the opening; and, preceded by the swiftest of the gun-boats, with their slower consorts crowding all sail in their wake, by three in the afternoon they bore down upon the hostile flotilla. The Americans were at anchor in South Bay, towards the farther end of the estuary, where they possessed a stockaded fort, and a small naval station. There was no escape for them; and it was a holocaust rather than a combat. Two war-galleys forthwith struck their flags, and the other three were blown up by their own crews; eleven score vessels of burden were sunk, burned, or taken; and the Americans themselves, before they retired into the woods, set fire to the whole collection of storehouses, and saw-mills, and forges, and repairing-sheds. The flame caught the dry forest-trees amidst which the

buildings stood, and the hill-side above was almost immediately in a blaze. An English officer, who arrived upon the scene when the conflagration was at its height, described it as the most tremendous spectacle on which his eyes were ever set. There have been grander fleets and more extensive naval establishments, than those by means of which Congress disputed the mastery of Lake Champlain; but none ever perished in more picturesque and complete destruction. In the official report of the catastrophe General Schuyler was informed, frankly and comprehensively, that "not one earthly thing was saved."

Burgoyne's people, meanwhile, were quite as active and venturesome on another element; and their victory would have been equally overwhelming by land if the wilderness had had a limit like the water. At the first gleam of dawn General Fraser was informed that Ticonderoga had been abandoned. He at once collected a small body of armed men by the process of sweeping together his line of pickets; led them into the fort, and planted the British colours upon the rampart; and then, "leaving orders for the brigade to follow as soon as they could accoutre," he hastened across the bridges, and started Southward on the track of the retiring enemy.<sup>1</sup> A day's forced march under a broiling sun brought him to Hubbardtown, where St. Clair had left a strong rear-guard. At five o'clock the next morning Fraser assailed the Americans, who were very advantageously posted, and whom he did not out-number. There ensued a hot and equal conflict, which was Waterloo on an extremely minute scale; for the combatants amounted to just one per cent of those who fought upon that great occasion; their respective losses were exactly in the same proportion; and the event was finally decided by the appearance of a German force on the right flank of the enemy. General Riedesel, who

<sup>1</sup> The whole story is vigorously, and most circumstantially, told in Burgoyne's despatch to Lord George Germaine.

had ridden far in advance of his columns, stood by the roadside fuming at their tardy arrival, and emitting a string of imprecations in High Dutch which were not unfamiliar to the ears of English veterans who had taken part in Prince Ferdinand's battles. In the course of an hour or two he laid hands on as many Brunswickers and Hessians as made up a couple of companies; and he thereupon hurried them into action, drumming and shouting, and singing battle hymns, and letting off their muskets as fast as they could load and fire. When Fraser heard them in the woods, making noise enough for half-a-dozen battalions, he caught the spirit of the movement, and gave the word for a charge. The British attacked with the bayonet, and the Americans broke and fled. A hundred and fifty of our soldiers had been killed or wounded, and a score of our officers. Twice as many Americans were left on the ground; and Colonel Francis, who had commanded them gallantly, and very expertly, was slain. But that was a small part of their losses. In the course of three days Burgoyne had captured a hundred and eighty of their cannon, all their reserve tents, very considerable stores of provisions, great herds of cattle, and a large quantity of ammunition. St. Clair's militiamen deserted him during the retreat; and when, with the rags and tatters of his unfortunate garrison, he rejoined General Schuyler at Fort Edward, the contagion of egotism and faint-heartedness did not fail to infect the main army. Several New England regiments chose that time, of all others, to claim their dismissal, and march off in the direction of their respective homes. Between the official capital of New York State, and an invading force perfectly equipped at all points, and flushed by conquest, there lay a poor company of some three thousand men, unprovided with artillery, and with no shelter from the weather; enfeebled by illness; depressed by failure; and abandoned in the hour of peril by those very New Englanders - who, as politicians, had been the loudest advocates of the Revolution, and the most prominent authors of the

war. That was a gloomy and inglorious week in the calendar of the Republic.

Then came the golden hour of Burgoyne's career; for he now at last had something to write which every one was sure to read, and which no one who feared to be called unpatriotic, would venture to criticise unfavourably. He set himself down to narrate the events of the preceding ten days at such a length that, if printed in book-form, they would have filled half again as many pages of an octavo volume. The despatch had merits. Burgoyne's account of his operations was in all respects accurate, and the services of his subordinates were acknowledged with the gratitude which became a chivalrous soldier; but, all the same, he was ill advised when he gave play to his talent for descriptive narrative. If war was made up of nothing except brilliant and unbroken successes, the story of it might safely be told, even in an official despatch, with entire frankness and graphic minuteness of detail. But a campaign seldom passes without some reverse of fortune; and, with such a contingency present to his mind, the most eloquent general, when writing for the information of the public at home, does wisely in restricting himself to conventional and colourless military phrases.

For the present, however, Burgoyne's countrymen, without misgivings or forebodings, abandoned themselves freely to the feast of rhetoric which he had spread before them. The narrative of his operations was printed in a London Gazette of imposing volume;<sup>1</sup> and the extracts from his private letters, which were handed round in society, deepened the favourable impression created by his published despatch. Especial notice was taken of the sentence in which the victorious general informed a friend, who was likewise an officer of high rank, that, to judge from the quality of their strategy,

<sup>1</sup> "I heard to-day at Richmond that Julius Cæsar Burgonius's Commentaries are to be published in an extraordinary Gazette of three-and-twenty pages in folio, to-morrow; — a counterpart to the Iliad in a nutshell!" Horace Walpole to the Countess of Ossory; August 24, 1777.

the rebels had no men of military science among them.<sup>1</sup> A contemporary historian relates that "the joy and exultation were extreme" among all politicians who insisted upon the unqualified subjugation, and unconditional submission, of the colonies. He described how "those contemptuous and most degrading charges which had been made against Americans of their wanting the resolution and abilities of men, even in the defence of whatever was dear to them, were now repeated and believed;" and how the supporters of the Ministry, with one accord, took pains to diffuse an opinion that the war in effect was over.<sup>2</sup> The success attending their endeavours to set that idea afloat was indicated by a proof which, in their generation, admitted of no gainsaying; for there was a sudden, and very perceptible, turn in the political betting. Five to one began to be laid against the recognition of American Independence, which not long before, at any rate in Brooks's Club, had been the subject of an even wager.<sup>3</sup> The Stocks, indeed, refused to rise, for the City was obstinately sceptical on the subject of America; but the country gentlemen in the House of Commons, — grasping at a shadow, and dropping their substance, — were prepared to vote whatever money Government might ask, in the belief that one final and well-sustained effort would crush the revolt, and usher in the halcyon hour when they might lighten their own financial burdens by taxing the vanquished colonies.

A still more credulous class of men accepted the Ministerial view of the situation with avidity, and sincere conviction. Loyalist exiles in England had been full of hope ever since it became matter of common knowledge that measures were on foot to encircle and stifle the rebellion by a threefold movement upon Albany. "The Tories here," (so one of them wrote

<sup>1</sup> General Burgoyne's letter to General Hervey of July 11.

<sup>2</sup> "History of Europe" in the *Annual Register* of 1777; chapter 8.

<sup>3</sup> *London Evening Post*; August 14, 1777. The betting book at Brooks's; June 29, 1777.



from London in April,) "believe the American game of independency is nearly up. Nay, so very sure are some, that there is no small talk of going off in August."<sup>1</sup> A score of the refugees had engaged berths in a packet for New York; while twelve or fifteen others chartered an armed vessel to convey themselves, and a large consignment of merchandise, across the ocean, so as to be on the spot when the Royal authority was re-established, and the American market was once more thrown open to English goods. It may well be believed that, when August actually arrived, and brought with it the news that Ticonderoga had fallen, the delight of these poor people exceeded all reasonable bounds. No doubts or qualms as to the conclusive nature of the British successes existed within the precincts of the royal Court. The King ran into his wife's room crying out that he had beaten all the Americans;<sup>2</sup> and he forthwith empowered Lord George Germaine to promise Burgoyne a Knight Commandership of the Bath, and to assure him that more substantial marks of favour were soon to follow. Burgoyne, most fortunately for himself, had lodged his interests in safe hands when he sailed from England. He was represented at home by the Earl of Derby, who knew his inmost thoughts, and was connected with him by many and close ties.<sup>3</sup> Lord Derby, in terms of deep respect, and dutiful gratitude for the Royal goodness, informed the Secretary of State that Burgoyne was known to cherish strong objections against the proposed honour "from whim, caprice, or some other motive." The nature of that motive has been disputed, and cannot now be ascertained; but Lord Derby's prudence was beyond all question.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Curwen to the Revd. Isaac Smith; 23 Brompton Row, Kensington, April 6, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> *The Last Journals of Horace Walpole*; Aug. 22, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> Burgoyne had been the schoolfellow, and life-long friend, of Lord Derby's father; he had married Lord Derby's aunt; and he now sate in Parliament for a Lancashire borough where the Stanley influence was very powerful.



Example had shown that generals in America had reason to dread, rather than to welcome, a premature reward. Sir William Howe's red ribbon had been sent from Windsor in consequence of the victory on Long Island; and it reached New York just in time for the defeat at Trenton.

## CHAPTER IV

FORT EDWARD. THE AMERICAN FOREST. BENNINGTON.  
FORT STANWIX

THE most sanguine anticipations of a speedy and crushing British victory would have been justified in the eyes of almost any military man by the outward aspect of Schuyler's army. He had been instructed to rely upon Massachusetts as his main source of strength; and Massachusetts had failed him at the critical moment. One county in that State had sent twelve hundred men to the front; and nine hundred of these took their departure, and made their way home, spreading panic and suspicion through their native villages.<sup>1</sup> Of the contingent from another county, which had marched into camp five hundred strong, only thirty officers and sergeants, and about the same number of privates, now remained. Schuyler had seventeen or eighteen hundred Continental linesmen; and a thousand New York militiamen, out of twice as many, had graciously consented to stay under arms for three more weeks in consideration of the fact that their own province was at present the seat of war. Cannons were lying about in the grass; but he had no gun-carriages whatsoever, and only five rounds of powder and ball for each of his muskets. Tents there were none, and not enough intrenching tools, and far too few camp-kettles to cook the food. Almost everything was lacking in Schuyler's army; but the general of that army was not wanting to himself. It is difficult to see how any man, under that trying ordeal, could have

<sup>1</sup> "The most aggravated circumstance of all is that many soldiers are coming home pretending that they were far pursued by the enemy." General Heath to Washington; Boston, July 16, 1777.

displayed sounder judgment or more effective industry. For the provision of ordnance-stores, and other material of war, he was dependent upon the ill-will, the apathy, and the financial poverty of the central government; but the supplies of victuals were largely drawn from his own neighbourhood, where he was extraordinarily beloved; and where his private credit, unsparingly pledged when it was a question of his soldiers having sufficient food, commanded much more confidence than those oblong slips of Treasury paper which called themselves dollars, but which already had fallen in purchasing value below the level of five-and-twenty cents.

Schuyler appealed for assistance, as in duty bound, to Congress, to the administrative departments at Philadelphia, and to the representative assemblies of New England; and, with more expectation of a satisfactory response, he addressed himself to powerful servants of the state whose respect he enjoyed, and whose patriotism and public spirit were known to him from of old. He wrote often, and urgently, to Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut; to General Heath, then in military command of Massachusetts; and to George Clinton, who, in the nick of time, had been elected Governor of New York State. And, as his prime reliance, he placed the interests of himself and his army, frankly and unreservedly, in the hands of George Washington, whom, over and over again, he had manfully and loyally supported when Washington himself was in the direst straits.<sup>1</sup> While awaiting succour from without, Schuyler employed his existing resources, vigorously and cleverly, on a course of action suggested to him by that intimate knowledge of the locality which he had gained during a busy lifetime. He drove off the sheep and cattle, and carted away or

<sup>1</sup> "I have indeed written to Springfield," (so Schuyler told Washington,) "for the cannon which were there. But the answer I got was that they were all ordered another way. I have also written to Boston, not that I expect anything will be sent me, but that I may stand justified; for I have never yet been able to get much of anything from thence. In this situation I can only look up to your Excellency for relief."

spoiled the standing crops, which lay within reach of the enemy's foragers. Retaining in his lines barely enough soldiers to serve as scouts and sentries, he converted the rest, for the time being, into spade-labourers and woodmen. He summoned to his aid the numerous colony of excavators, and lumberers, and artisans who were permanently engaged in developing, and keeping in repair and order, his enormous property, which had been regarded as the model estate of all colonial America, and which was now the actual scene of hostilities. With marvellous celerity, and almost irreparable completeness of destruction, he broke up the roads, and choked the water-ways, along which Burgoyne's advance would necessarily be conducted. And then, having given to his country everything else which he possessed, he renounced, for her sake, his cherished popularity, and exposed himself to the triumphant and pitiless malice of his political adversaries. Convinced, as he was, that a premature battle meant ruin to the American cause, he abandoned Fort Edward, which was a fortress only in name, and withdrew his army by gradual stages to a carefully selected position at Stillwater, on the west bank of the Hudson River, about ten miles to the Southward of his own ancestral country-seat at Saratoga.

The storm of obloquy and misrepresentation at once commenced to rage with unbridled violence. John Adams, as acute a man as ever set up for a military critic without any aptitude for the trade, had already pronounced, when he heard the bad news about Ticonderoga, that his countrymen would never successfully defend a post until they had shot a general; and, so soon as Philadelphia learned that the Northern army had relinquished Fort Edward to the invaders, and had retreated to a point only ten leagues in front of Albany, Schuyler's opponents, whether in or out of Congress, felt assured that their chance had come for wrecking his career, and covering his name with reproach and dishonour. There was one man who took a calmer, a

more favourable, and a wiser view of the strategy which noisy and half-informed people declared to have been inspired by pusillanimity, and even by treachery. Washington was fully persuaded that the British, in approaching Albany from the North, had undertaken a task beyond their strength. After closely examining the reasons given for each successive movement, he accepted Schuyler's own account of the local circumstances which had governed the course of the campaign; he applauded, and even stimulated, that general's distrust of fortified places which could be turned or taken;<sup>1</sup> and he quietly, but very plainly, expressed it as his belief that, the deeper Burgoyne penetrated into the interior of the States, the harder he would find it to return. George Washington did not fear committing himself beforehand to a definite view of the military probabilities, if his forecast was of a nature to put fresh heart into a sorely exercised colleague. "Though our affairs," he wrote, "for some days past have worn a dark and gloomy aspect, I look forward to a fortunate and happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet sooner or later an effectual check, and that the success he has had will precipitate his ruin."

Washington took care to leave nothing undone which might contribute to the fulfilment of his own hopeful prognostications. He studied the list of Schuyler's requirements with an attention which allowed no item to escape his notice. Although he himself lived in daily expectation of having Sir William Howe, with

<sup>1</sup> Schuyler told Washington, on the 26th July, that the works at Fort Edward were in ruins. "They are so utterly defenceless that I have frequently galloped my horse in on one side, and out at the other. But, when it was in the best condition possible, with the best troops to garrison it, and provided with every necessary, it would not have stood two days' siege after proper batteries had been opened."

On the 22nd of that month Washington had written to Schuyler as follows. "It will not be advisable to repose too much confidence in the works you are about to erect. I begin to consider lines as a kind of trap, and as not answering the valuable purposes expected from them, unless they are in passes that cannot be avoided by the enemy."

five-and-thirty regiments of Royal infantry, upon his hands, he supplied those requirements out of his own scanty means with a noble and well-judged disinterestedness; and he provided first what was needed most. On the very day that Schuyler's forlorn message arrived at the headquarters of the Southern army, ten field-guns, equipped and harnessed, were started on their way towards Albany; together with all the musket-cartridges that were in store at the arsenal, as well as sixty barrels of powder, and a weight of lead to correspond. Tents, indeed, could not be furnished, since there were no tents in stock; but Washington remembered the camp kettles, and the shovels and pickaxes, not one of which, without his express and peremptory intervention, would ever have been issued from the national magazines for use in the Northern army. He detached from his own insufficient force two small brigades of veterans; noticeable among whom were Colonel Glover's fishermen from Marblehead, and the battalion which Rufus Putnam had trained into a corps of rough, but very ready, pioneers and artificers. Washington's early experiences of forest warfare had lain along the Ohio, and not on the Hudson and the Mohawk rivers; but the primeval wilderness had the same features everywhere; and he knew the advantage to a general, during a campaign in the backwoods, of having people about him who could build bridges, and fabricate breastworks, rapidly and out of rude materials. And, while his other consignments were still upon the road, he followed them up with the most portable and valuable of all military reinforcements in the person of an officer who would supplement Schuyler's deficiencies, whether of bodily health or martial genius; and who could be trusted to live in reasonable harmony with the chief under whom he served, if only that chief would consent to allot him a great deal more than his fair share of hard fighting.

Such an officer was now at Washington's disposal. On the nineteenth February, 1777, Congress had ap-



pointed five additional Major Generals; and Benedict Arnold's name was nowhere among the number. The Brigadiers selected for promotion were all his juniors; while he himself was left at the head of the list of colonels, in the well-known, and rather undignified, position of a veteran too respectable to be harshly removed from the service, but notoriously unequal to the emergencies of a command in the field. The blow was cruel; and it was felt by Washington not less keenly, and resented more openly, than by Arnold himself. The Commander-in-Chief let Congress know that, in his opinion, they had put an inexplicable and unpardonable slight upon an officer who was second to none in all the qualities of a military leader;<sup>1</sup> and in a succession of letters, marked by intelligent sympathy and delicate feeling, he counselled Arnold to refrain from taking any hasty and irrevocable decision, and assured him that no endeavour on his own part should be wanting to correct an act of such flagrant injustice and signal impolicy. Arnold evinced his sense of Washington's friendliness, in the manner most acceptable to his correspondent, by maintaining an attitude of silence and self-control. "Every personal injury," (he replied,) "shall be buried in my zeal for the safety and happiness of my country, in whose cause I have repeatedly fought and bled, and am ready at all times to risk my life."

These gallant words were soon brought to the proof. Towards the end of April Governor Tryon sailed from New York with a force of two thousand infantry. He landed on the coast of Connecticut, between the two model New England villages of Fairfield and Norwalk; both of which, under pressure of time, but not (as the future was to show) from any want of inclination, he on this occasion left unburned. Like a practical man, he set business before pleasure. He marched straight up-

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Richard Henry Lee, in Congress; Morristown, March 17, 1777. "I am anxious," (so Washington wrote,) "to know whether General Arnold's non-promotion was owing to accident or design; and the cause of it. Surely a more active, a more spirited, and sensible officer fills no department in our army."

country to Danbury, where he destroyed a large magazine of provisions and ordnance stores belonging to the Revolutionary government; and it was only after he had accomplished the public object of his mission that he allowed himself the satisfaction of setting fire to every private dwelling-house which had not a Tory owner. The little town blazed all through the night, and would have served as a beacon to alarm the neighbourhood if the whole population of the Eastern townships had not been awake already. Five or six hundred minute-men were mustered under the orders of two militia generals; and Benedict Arnold, who happened to be at Newhaven on a visit to his sister, was with them in the character of a volunteer. Connecticut lay outside the sphere of his professional employment; but, on an occasion like the present, he had never been a stickler about the precise nature of his military authority, which always met with sufficient recognition in those very perilous places where he most cared to exercise it. When Tryon started on his return march in the early morning his rear-guard was furiously attacked by General David Wooster, a citizen warrior near seventy years of age, who had often helped King George the Second, and King George the Third, to beat the French and Spaniards on land and water. Wooster, with his spine broken, was soon carried away to die;<sup>1</sup> and his people were a mere handful; but they could not be shaken off until Tryon's main column had been halted and deployed, and his artillery brought into action. At a defile two miles farther on the British found Arnold planted across their path. His troops were not enough to cover a front of half a furlong; but he stood up to his work as stiffly as if he had at his disposition a couple of brigades. The Americans were at last out-flanked,

<sup>1</sup> Congress voted a monument to General Wooster, which was not erected until eighty years afterwards. His grave was then opened; and among the mouldering fragments of the old man's uniform, and the homely badges of his rank, there was found the heavy regulation bullet which had killed him.

and driven from their position; and Arnold, who was always a laggard when it was a question of moving towards the rear, had the exclusive benefit of a volley from a whole platoon at the distance of thirty yards. His horse fell, riddled with balls; and he saved his own life, not for the first time in the course of it, by his deadly coolness with the pistol.

This desperate and unequal fighting had not been wasted; for the day was far spent, and Tryon had still much ground to cover before he could reach his ships. The British encamped during the night; and, when they resumed their march at dawn, all Connecticut was in arms around them. Arnold's presence was visible and dominant at every critical point along their line of retreat; and, (no small matter to a commanding officer with a crippled leg,) the horse which carried him on that day was not shot until very near the end of the battle. There were sharp encounters whenever the Americans attempted to block the road; but otherwise the English general did not retaliate upon his pursuers. His soldiers hurried along, galled by musketry, and (as the afternoon proceeded) by cannon. They arrived at the water's edge exhausted and disheartened, and so incapable of any further exertion that they owed their preservation from capture to the brilliant valour of the Marines who had been ordered ashore from our frigates to protect the re-embarkation. Tryon lost a tenth part of his men; but, on the other hand, he had deprived the enemy of stores to the value of fifteen or sixteen thousand pounds sterling, and had burned a score or two of quiet families out of house and home. The affair was a desultory and isolated raid, aiming at no solid military advantage; foredoomed to disaster; and quite exceptionally irritating to the population of the locality. It was Lexington over again, in every particular, except that at Lexington the Royal forces had been commanded by a man of honour.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Good English officers already discerned the futility and risk of such operations as the expedition to Danbury. "We ought to avoid attacking

When the story of Danbury was made public, Arnold received the promotion which had so long been his due; and Congress presented him with a horse "properly caparisoned, as a token of his gallant conduct." The new Major General, however, declined to be pacified; and he was still bickering with the Board of War, and the Committee of Accounts, when Washington, who understood him better than he understood himself, contrived that he should be sent North to assist Schuyler in making head against Burgoyne's army. Arnold at once dropped his grievances, waived all his personal claims, and expressed himself ready to take orders not only from General Schuyler, but also from General St. Clair, who was one of the five officers by whom he had recently been superseded. He passed a night at Washington's headquarters, where the two generals talked over the military prospect, shared a modest repast and very narrow house-room, and even found time to put in an appearance at a neighbouring Lodge in the peaceful character of Brother Masons.<sup>1</sup> Arnold then repaired to his post without delay. Immediately on his arrival he had an opportunity of doing the American cause as important a service as any which he could have rendered with his sword; for he warmly supported Schuyler's prudent and far-sighted proposal to retire from the exposed position of Fort Edward, and take up his ground thirty miles farther to the Southward at Still-

any considerable body of them, — suppose two or three hundred, — unless we can pursue our advantage, or at least take post; for, though we may carry our point, nevertheless, when we attempt to return to our Quarters, we may be assured of their harassing us on our retreat." So Colonel Harcourt wrote to his father more than a month before Tryon set out for Connecticut.

<sup>1</sup> Arnold was with Washington on the fifteenth July. On the twentieth of that month there is the following entry in Colonel Pickering's journal. "Headquarters at Galloway's; an old log-house. The General lodged on a bed, and his family on the floor about him. We had plenty of sepawn and milk, and all were contented." Sepawn was porridge made of Indian corn.

The two autographs were entered in the records of the Masonic Lodge. Washington's signature may still be read; but a thick black mark has been drawn over the name of Arnold.

water. The hero of Danbury and of Valcour Island had no notion of concealing his opinion on a question of practical strategy for fear of being taunted with want of spirit by a parcel of civilians at Philadelphia.

The wisdom of Schuyler's policy in avoiding a battle was by this time distressingly evident to yet another general whose personal interest in the result of the campaign was not inferior to Schuyler's own. The most serious obstacles to the re-conquest of America, — obstacles which the British people had hitherto very dimly apprehended, and of which the British Ministry never made any account at all, — consisted in the vast distances, and still more in the natural difficulties, of that country. A faithful and striking picture of these difficulties is to be found in an article contributed to an English Magazine while the fate of Burgoyne's expedition was still in suspense. That article contained information which, in the shape of a confidential report from an officer of the Royal Engineers, ought undoubtedly to have been submitted to the Cabinet when they were asked to give their sanction to the Northern expedition, or, (better yet,) before ever they began the war.<sup>1</sup> The forest highways, (so this writer stated,) very seldom ran straight for many yards together, but were continually on the turn around innumerable fallen trees, which in time of peace were never cleared away for want of hands to remove them.<sup>2</sup> In time of war, a single regiment of American militiamen, — who manipulated their axes not less effectively, and much more elegantly, than their firelocks, — could within the twenty-four hours

<sup>1</sup> This article, entitled *Some of the circumstances which inevitably retard the Progress of the Northern Army through the uninhabited countries of America*, may be read in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for October 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The rotting trunks, each of which occasioned a greater or shorter diversion of the road, were "as plenty as lamp-posts upon a highway about London, and frequently as thick as the lamps upon Westminster Bridge."



render a long stretch of road impracticable even for infantry. Every two or three miles there was a bridge "twenty, thirty, or forty feet high, and twice or three times as long, over a creek, or rather a great gutter between two hills." For a retreating army it was an easy matter to destroy those bridges; but every one of them would have to be re-built by the invaders at a great cost of time and ingenuity. Frequent patches of swamp, impassable otherwise for artillery, required to be paved with small trees, cut into lengths of ten or twelve feet, and laid side by side over a space of many yards, or even some furlongs.<sup>1</sup> An American campaign, (the author remarked,) was well calculated to correct the prophecies of chimney-corner strategists; and an officer, returning from such a service, would readily admit that he brought back to Europe at least twice the stock of patience which he had carried with him on his outward voyage.

Much had been written in England, and with some justice, about the expertness and the intrepidity of Canadian boatmen. Great things, which were for the most part impossibilities, had been expected from them by Transport officers, and Commissariat officers, who were new to America, and who had still to learn that the Northern waters of that Continent did not lend themselves readily to internal navigation. The larger rivers, frozen late into April, and then swollen into furious torrents by the melting snow, provided a very swift, and most exciting, form of travel during the month or six weeks which elapsed before the end of May; but after that date the droughts of summer soon reduced the main current to a narrow and most uncertain channel.<sup>2</sup> The smaller streams were over-

<sup>1</sup> Between the Oneida lake, and the Seneca River, there were upwards of a hundred and thirty such causeways in the space of twelve miles.

<sup>2</sup> During the hot weather, in the principal rivers, a strip of navigable water wound through shallows so extensive and treacherous that a practised boatman was sometimes a quarter of an hour in wading from his vessel to the shore.



arched with gigantic timber, which grew on their banks more luxuriantly than in the drier soil of the interior forest; and those streams could be rendered useless for military purposes by a comparatively small expenditure of well-placed labour. The Marquis de Montcalm, in the last French war, took such effective measures for the obstruction of a certain water-way that the surface was hidden by trunks and branches for twenty-four computed miles; and Lord Amherst's pioneers spent many weeks in laboriously cutting, through that tangled wreck of trees, a passage for his fleet of boats.

Amherst had the rare good fortune to serve under William Pitt, — a statesman who understood war, who never pressed or flurried his generals, and who stinted them in time as little as in the other hardly more essential requisites for military success. Lord North's Cabinet, however, unlike William Pitt's, would seem to have derived their notion of the backwoods from maps in which New York State, with its fifty thousand square miles, showed of a size with Gloucestershire; where the Adirondacks, and the Green Mountains, stood as clear from forest as the Malvern Hills; and where the Kennebec and the Mohawk flowed, to all appearance, through smooth lowlands like the valleys of the Severn and the Thames. It was by the light of such maps that Burgoyne had been accustomed to explain how he would isolate the Eastern colonies from the rest of the Confederacy by patrolling the chain of lakes and rivers with his gun-boats, and scouring the roads with his flying columns. But technical phrases, which carried cheerful conviction across a dinner-table in Mayfair, did not sound as if they covered the whole of the military situation when repeated in the heart of the American jungle. By the time that Burgoyne's second despatch came to be written he was forced to admit that the toil of the march was great, though supported by the troops with the utmost alacrity. They had, (he said,) not only to cut away layers of large timber-trees,

with the branches interlaced, which the enemy had felled, "both lengthwise and across the road;" but they likewise had above forty bridges to construct, and others to repair,—one of which was of logs, over a morass two miles in extent.<sup>1</sup> The British reached Skenesborough, at the head of Lake Champlain, on the tenth of July; and on the thirtieth they transferred their camp to Fort Edward. Ably directed by their military chiefs, and working like men the first edge of whose strength and ardour was still unblunted, they had advanced exactly twenty miles in the course of twenty days.

At that rate of speed Burgoyne reached Fort Edward, and found himself as far removed as ever from his real object, which was the American army. With sound judgment,—if judgment were of any avail in that nightmare of a country,—he had established his base of supply at the South end of Lake George, up to which point the whole of his stores could be brought by water. But Schuyler had sent a thousand men, axe in hand, up each of the roads which led from Fort George to Fort Edward; and though General Phillips, by supreme exertions, at length cleared a path for wheeled vehicles, the means of transport were far below the needs of the expedition. The most indispensable requisite for any forward movement was the construction of two solid bridges over the two broad and deep streams which flowed between the British camp and the town of Albany; and all the heavy barges, which were to support the planking of those bridges, had to be hauled overland every yard of the way between Lake George and the bank of the Hudson River. Of the horses which had been ordered by contract in Canada, two out of every three never reached the front; and Burgoyne, employing the utmost industry, had been able to collect only fifty teams of

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant General Burgoyne to Lord George Germaine; Headquarters upon Hudson's River, near Fort Edward; July 30, 1777. This letter was received at Whitehall on the twenty-fourth of September.

oxen from the district in which he was now operating. His military train, moreover, carried a great deal besides the materials of his bridges; for, as the army advanced, his commissariat supplies had all to be carted from the rear. Schuyler had swept the countryside so bare of food that the few Tory Loyalists, who had not been frightened out of the neighbourhood by Burgoyne's Indians, were only preserved from famine by Burgoyne's charity.<sup>1</sup>

The Royal troops were reduced to subsist on pork and beef which had been salted, and on flour which had been ground, in England. Their ration was sometimes deficient; and the younger men husbanded it carelessly. A private on the march was already laden with a blanket, a badly hung knapsack, a canteen for water, a hatchet, his share of the tent equipage and the cooking-vessels, his side-arms, sixty cartridges containing bullets of a bore large enough to break a horse's leg, and a musket twice as heavy as the double-barrelled gun with which modern country gentlemen go after partridges. And now, in addition to this ponderous outfit, the British soldier was directed to bring along with him his provisions for four days; which before the end of that period, in a hot July, had usually become no very tempting burden. He often emptied his haversack on to the roadside in the hope of getting something fresher, and more to his taste, when he reached the bivouac;<sup>2</sup> and the disappointment which there awaited him was sharpened by a well-founded belief that the German auxiliaries fared better than himself. Riedesel's Brunswickers were more knowing purveyors than our own people, and less unselfish comrades; for their foraging parties gleaned up many sheep and cattle, and then omitted to

<sup>1</sup> "Among such as sued for protection are many families totally destitute of corn; and it is very embarrassing how to grant their request upon this article without great inconvenience, or refuse it without equal inhumanity." Burgoyne to Lord George Germaine; Fort Edward, July 30, 1777. The letter was private.

<sup>2</sup> The actual words, as frequently overheard on such occasions by British officers, are reported in Lieutenant Anburey's 36th letter.

bring their prizes into the common stock. Burgoyne's remonstrances were churlishly received, and stolidly disregarded; but he never appealed in vain to his own countrymen on a point of military honour and patriotic duty. He frankly took the English officers into his confidence with respect to the difficulties of transport, and reminded them that gentlemen, who served in America during the last French war, had foregone their claims to more roomy tents than those in use among the rank and file, and had often confined their personal baggage to one knapsack for a month together. That courteous and friendly hint was taken in a kindred spirit. Every British regiment sent the whole of its superfluities, and most of its comforts, back to Ticonderoga; but the Germans indignantly refused to separate themselves from their packages, which they fully intended, when once they arrived among the rich towns and villages to the Southward, should be largely increased both in bulk and value.<sup>1</sup>

Burgoyne had his troubles with the Brunswickers; but they were by no means the most unmanageable people for whose conduct he was so unfortunate as to be responsible. During the arduous pursuit of General St. Clair, and the severe fighting at Hubbardtown, our Indians had remained behind at Ticonderoga in order to plunder the American cantonments; and, now that they had at last rejoined the army, their presence was more a burden than a blessing. While everyone else was on short commons, their gluttony could not be satisfied with less than full rations; and an Indian ration was in itself a surfeit for any ordinary European. Their peculiar habits were an offence to all the senses of every decent civilised man. Officers, who took part in Burgoyne's expedition, always remembered with disgust the sight and smell of a warrior seated in front of a stolen mirror for several

<sup>1</sup> Some important extracts from Burgoyne's correspondence, bearing on his relations with General Riedesel, are given in the sixth Chapter of de Fonblanque's volume.

hours together, smearing himself with rancid bear's grease, and layer after layer of glaring paints, in preparation for a battle from which he was sure to run away as soon as the first shot was fired. More intolerable still were the hideous yells poured forth by the gangs of braves on their return from a successful foray, as they marched through the English bivouacs bringing with them many scalps, and very few living captives. It was quite useless for Burgoyne to invoke the loyalty of the civil population so long as all the approaches to his camp were beset by savages who could not tell a Tory from a Whig, and who took care never to inform themselves about the politics of their victim while his hair still remained upon his head. A deputation of Royalist partisans adventured themselves across the British lines for the purpose of remonstrating with General Fraser on the subject of these indiscriminate brutalities; but that officer told them plainly that it was impossible to check such irregularities in a conquered country. Fraser, indeed, alone among his military colleagues, still set a high value upon the co-operation of the Indians. When he sent off to Canada, under a very feeble escort, a numerous detachment of Americans who had been taken in battle, he informed the prisoners that, if they attempted to escape, the red men would be set upon their trail, and they would all be scalped.

Before many days were over, even Fraser himself had had more than enough of the Indians. There resided in the vicinity of Fort Edward a certain Mrs. Mac Neil, a staunch Tory who was a cousin of his own; and Scotch cousinships count for much. She had with her a young friend, Jane Mac Crea, the daughter of a clergyman of their own nation, who was a girl of graceful form, and attractive by her intelligent countenance and her endearing disposition. Her lover was a fine, dashing fellow who had brought a company of Loyalist sharpshooters to the assistance of Burgoyne. Early in the morning of the twenty-seventh July some of our



Indian auxiliaries broke into Mrs. Mac Neil's house, and dragged off the two ladies with circumstances of barbarous violence. Meanwhile another party entered the dwelling of a gentleman who, (whether that made the case worse or better,) had always been strongly opposed to the Revolution, and murdered him, his wife and her sister, his three children, and all his negroes. Later in the day Mrs. Mac Neil was led into the British camp almost naked, in a pitiable condition of exhaustion and distress, and terribly anxious about the fate of her young companion. Her spirit had not been broken; and, when she was brought into the presence of her kinsman, she let that eminent officer hear some home truths. Not long afterwards the marauders arrived with their spoils, which included a mass of glossy hair a yard and a quarter long, which Mrs. Mac Neil recognised as the hair of Jane Mac Crea. Burgoyne summoned the Indians to a council, and demanded the surrender of the poor girl's murderer, with every intention of sending him immediately to the gallows. But the guilty warrior was an important personage, — a chief of gigantic stature, known as the Wyandot Panther, who was greatly feared and admired by all his tribesmen. It was represented to the British general that, if his demand was pressed, the red men would go off in a body, and return to their villages burning and devastating the unprotected country on both sides of the Canadian frontier; and those who knew the Indians best were very positive that, before they left the district, they would avenge their friend by taking the lives of English sentries. With this information before him, Burgoyne allowed the delinquent to go unpunished. The Wyandot Panther departed in peace, after he had secured a purchaser for his trophy; and the storm which threatened to disturb the relations between King George and his allies ended, for the present, in nothing more serious than a passing cloud.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fate of Jane Mac Crea soon took shape in a legend which has long ere this been disproved and discredited. Her betrothed had *not*

Burgoyne was most uneasy. He found it a hard matter to provide his troops with their daily bread; and he had as yet done little or nothing towards accumulating a reserve of provisions which would enable him to pursue an aggressive movement upon Stillwater and Albany. He was in the humour for a rash, and even a desperate, enterprise; and the tempter was at hand. The principal citizen in those parts, after whom Skenesborough was then called, was Philip Skene, an English major on half-pay, who held under Royal Patent a large tract of land to the South of Lake Champlain. He had formerly been known as an officer of remarkable courage; and he soon proved that he had lost none of it; but he was one of those fatal counsellors whose flattering tales, in the earlier phases of the colonial controversy, had enticed the British ministry, through folly and injustice, into disgrace and irreparable disaster. Skene was of small account in America; but his silly letters carried more weight in Downing Street than all the sober and authoritative expostulations which emanated from such genuine friends to England as Richard Penn and John Dickinson.<sup>1</sup> In the July and August of 1777 this gentleman was constantly at Burgoyne's elbow; and he imparted to that very impressionable general his own ideas about the strategy which suited the topography of the

commissioned a pair of Indians to escort her into the British camp for her wedding. There occurred none of that stage business, borrowed from the quarrel between the two villains in the "Babes in the Wood," which has found its way into many histories. Lieutenant Jones did *not* die insane, nor did he get himself killed in battle. He bought the poor girl's hair, and went away to Canada, where he lived into old age, melancholy and taciturn; though he was always ready to protest against the mass of sentimental absurdity which had gathered itself round the dreadful truth. He invariably spent the last week of July in solitude and seclusion.

<sup>1</sup> "Colonel Skene, to whom I gave such exalted letters to you, is by no Means the very great and *consequential* Man that he *will* endeavour to make all believe." Letter from Henry Cruger in London to a relative at New York; May 3, 1775.

In the middle of July, 1777, Skene wrote to Lord Dartmouth very positively about the hopeless condition of the rebels in Burgoyne's front. He admitted, however, that it was not easy to execute concerted and decisive military operations in that "wooden country,"

country, and his own illusions with reference to the political sympathies of its inhabitants.

Thirty miles to the South East of Fort Edward, at the foot of the Green Mountains, lay the village of Bennington, where supplies had been collected from the New England provinces for the use of Schuyler's army. The place contained well-filled granaries, large herds of cattle, and wheel-carriages and horses in considerable number, although not so many as the English believed. At that moment in the campaign the stores of Bennington would have been a precious and a timely prize; but to send a very small body of troops on a raiding expedition across the frontier of the Hampshire Grants was like thrusting the bare hand into a bee-hive in quest of honey. That, however, was the course which Major Skene recommended, and which, after some hesitation, Burgoyne adopted. Towards the middle of August, 1777, he despatched Colonel Baum in the direction of Bennington with a mixed party of small and heterogeneous detachments, numbering in all five or six hundred men, of whom two thirds may have been Germans.<sup>1</sup> Burgoyne could spare very few soldiers; but he lavished upon the leader of the expedition, out of his abundance, instructions of very liberal scope embodied in exceedingly well-turned phrases. Colonel Baum was directed "to try the affections of the country, and disconcert the councils of the enemy;" to arrest all officers, civil and military, who were acting under the orders of Congress; to impose a subsidy on the towns, and take hostages for the payment; and to bring back not fewer than one thousand three hundred horses, "tied in strings of ten each, in order that one

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fortescue, in his *History of the British Army*, states the composition of the force, as originally ordered by Burgoyne, to have been "150 Brunswick dismounted dragoons, 50 picked British marksmen, 150 Provincial soldiers, 56 Provincial and Canadian volunteers, and 80 Indians." Captain Max Von Eekling, in his *Account of the German Troops in the War of Independence*, says that the proportion of Brunswickers in Baum's column was largely increased before the expedition started; and that was certainly the case.

man might lead ten horses." The merits of Burgoyne's official diction were lost upon Colonel Baum, who did not comprehend a word of English; but Major Skene was attached to his command, and served him as an adviser and an interpreter. Skene solemnly assured the German colonel that, in the districts which he was preparing to invade, the friends of the British cause were as five to one, and only awaited the appearance of a British force in order to display their true colours.

The inhabitants of those districts had in their midst, at that very moment, a trusted leader who was more intimately informed about their political sentiments than Major Skene, and who could make himself understood by them a great deal better than Colonel Baum. John Stark,—for he was now again a private citizen, ungraced by any military title,—had acquired extraordinary distinction in the most famous conflicts of the Revolution. Congress, enamoured of mediocrities, ignored his claims for promotion; and Stark had resigned his commission in the Continental army, and was now living peacefully at his farm in New Hampshire. The authorities of that State received an earnest request for help from the Committee of Safety for the Hampshire Grants; and the members of the Provincial Assembly, who had just concluded their Session, and departed for their homes, were brought back to their duties by a pressing summons. Their Speaker, John Langdon of Portsmouth, addressed them in words which it is well to quote in full as a specimen of the oratory employed, during those sternly practical times, in the unsophisticated regions situated to the North of the Merrimac River. "I have," he said, "three thousand dollars in hard money. I will pledge my plate for three thousand more. I have seventy hogsheads of Tobago rum, which shall be sold for the most it will bring. These are at the service of the State. If we succeed in defending our homes, I may be remunerated; if we do not, the property will be of no value to me. Our old friend Stark, who so nobly sustained the honour of our State

at Bunker's Hill, may be safely entrusted with the conduct of the enterprise, and we will check the progress of Burgoyne."

And so the little community, instead of relying on the charitable exertions of the central government, proceeded to declare a sort of war within a war against General Burgoyne and his army. Dependent for their safety upon their own energy, and their own exiguous resources, the people of New Hampshire were firmly resolved to meet the peril under a chief of their own choosing. A day of fasting and prayer was duly proclaimed; the local Tories were disarmed; and General Stark, (for so his neighbours, during the next fortnight, insisted on calling him,) was invested with the supreme command. He resumed the old uniform which he had laid aside, and bade farewell to his charming wife, whom he was very soon to render famous among women. The militiamen of the State eagerly flocked to the banner of a warrior whose name was a familiar word in all their households; and there were soon enough of them to form two respectable brigades of infantry. Stark was ordered by General Schuyler to join the camp at Stillwater, and bring all his troops with him; but he flatly refused to march. His contumacious bearing aroused the indignation of Congress; and that body publicly characterised the independent course taken by the Assembly of New Hampshire as "destructive of military subordination, and highly prejudicial to the common cause." News travelled slowly; and, several days before the Resolution embodying that scathing rebuke was entered on the Journals of the House, events had occurred which made its authors, until their dying hour, sincerely wish that they had left the matter alone.

Any mischief which might have resulted from the ill-informed policy of the statesmen at Philadelphia had been corrected by the good sense of their servant on the spot. General Lincoln, who commanded for Congress in the Hampshire Grants, while in his



official capacity he condemned Stark's refractory conduct, had no intention of leaving him unsupported whenever the decisive moment came. He quietly placed at the disposal of the valiant malcontent all that was left of Seth Warner's battalion of the Green Mountain Boys, who in the recent action during the retreat from Ticonderoga had behaved with intrepidity, and suffered very heavily, for the common cause; and who were certain to acquit themselves not less manfully in defence of their own firesides. In that regiment, as even Major Skene would have admitted, the proportion of enemies to American Independence must have been considerably less than five to one. The men of the Hampshire Grants were a rude and stubborn clan, tenacious of their rights, and capable of making themselves excessively disagreeable to anyone who interfered with their liberty or their property. Twelve years before this date they had expelled across the border all those unlucky New York agriculturists to whom the lands around Bennington had been granted by Royal Patent; and they had still less inclination to welcome Canadian savages, and German fusiliers, as visitors in their townships and occupants of their parlours. Towards the end of the Revolutionary war a French nobleman in General Rochambeau's army, amicably exchanging confidences with an officer in one of our Highland regiments, confessed himself at a loss to understand the motive which inspired the Americans in battle. "I," he said, "fight for my master. You for yours. Who is it that these people are fighting for?"<sup>1</sup> The Green Mountain Boys, and the New Hampshire minute-men, could doubtless have given reasons for the political faith that was in them; but for the present they were satisfied with the knowledge that they were fighting to preserve their children from the tomahawk, and their roof-trees from the torch.

Colonel Baum's perplexities began from the instant

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote was told by Nicolas Chamfort, a brilliant Academician, and a friend of Mirabeau.

when he crossed the frontier of the Hampshire Grants. His main strength consisted in a regiment of Brunswick Dragoons,—as workmanlike a cavalry as might be found in Europe, but singularly unsuited for a forced march on foot through a half-settled district in the Northern provinces of America. “They were equipped with long, heavy riding boots, with big spurs, thick leathern breeches, heavy gauntlets, a hat with a thick feather; at their side a strong sabretasch, and a short, heavy carbine, while a big pig-tail was an important part of this extraordinary costume.”<sup>1</sup> These unwieldy troopers, according to the original scheme of the expedition, were to be mounted on chargers captured at Bennington, or picked up in the course of their journey; but, while Baum’s dragoons were labouring along bad roads in their absurd panoply, his Indian allies, accoutred for secret and rapid movement, ransacked the pastures far and wide, destroying the horses, or driving them away to be sold at some future time for their own profit. Baum complained bitterly that the red men could not be controlled. They plundered everything and everybody; they slaughtered wholesale the herds of fine cattle which grazed on the lower slopes of the Green Mountains; and they brought nothing into camp except the cow-bells, of which, after their fashion, they affected to be collectors. The composition of the invading force was gravely defective, and its numbers entirely insufficient. A Tory guide, who had been attached to the column, gave it as his opinion, when he was out of Major Skene’s hearing, that the country could not be safely entered by fewer than three thousand men. No Loyalist recruits presented themselves for enrolment; and it was rumoured, and very soon was ascertained, that the rebels were in great strength at Bennington. The German advance came to a stand-still six or seven miles to the North of that village. Baum planted

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 7 of Captain Von Eekling’s *History*.

himself on some very defensible ground, overlooking a small river; surrounded his encampment with well-planned and substantial earthworks; and sent back an express to Fort Edward with an urgent petition for assistance. Burgoyne despatched to the aid of the threatened commander a force somewhat larger than that which he had with him already. It was under the orders of Lieutenant-Colonel Breymann, who passed, with good reason, for the best among General Riedesel's officers.

The American skirmishers had begun to make their presence felt at Baum's outposts. Stark was in a hurry to fight, whether with, or without, his own reserves; and he had still less intention of waiting for the appearance of the enemy's reinforcements. He made an appointment with Seth Warner's regiment, which was cantoned in distant quarters, to meet him at the scene of action; and he moved forward with his New Hampshiremen into the immediate vicinity of the German intrenchments. During the night of the fifteenth August, 1777, he was joined by a detachment of militia from the Berkshire mountains of Massachusetts, including the male parishioners of Pittsfield, with the parson at their head. The reverend gentleman told the American commander that his congregation had often been summoned to war, and had invariably been disappointed of a fight; to which Stark rejoined that he could not commence business in the dark, but that, if the Lord allowed another day to break, they should every one of them have as much fighting as their hearts could desire.

The sun rose at his usual hour, and shone with the extreme of glare and fervour; and, all the morning through, small knots of farmers, — some in blue frocks, and more of them in their shirt sleeves, — were quietly stealing around towards the rear of the hostile position. Two years before this date the German officers, when they had their first sight of Washington's infantry, pronounced that the rebels looked like a mob which had

been hastily gathered together;<sup>1</sup> but these groups of half-dressed rustics did not appear to possess even the cohesion of a mob. Major Skene conjectured that they were local Tories, watching an opportunity to enter the Royal lines for the purpose of taking the Oath of Allegiance; and Colonel Baum, in any case, attached very little importance to their proceedings.<sup>2</sup> By three in the afternoon the Brunswicker was completely surrounded. The Americans advanced upon his pickets, drove them into the redoubt, and ensconced themselves behind such cover as they could procure within shooting distance of the garrison. The Indians made their exit at once, and rushed off in a body, howling and jingling their cow-bells; but otherwise the whole of both the little armies became immediately engaged in a fierce and incessant battle. "It lasted," said Stark, "two hours, and was the hottest I ever saw. It was like one continued clap of thunder." And yet Stark had heard the sustained fusillade at Bunker's Hill, and the fiendish din in the streets at Trenton.

Both parties raised a tremendous noise; but the execution actually done, on the one side and on the other, was very unequal. Two out of every five Brunswickers were hit by American bullets; and some of the New Hampshire militia crept within ten or twelve yards of the battery, and shot down the Hanau artillerymen at their guns. The dragoons, as far as courage and devotion would serve, maintained the high reputation of their corps; but they showed no great skill with their rather indifferent fire-arms. Victory for the assailants was only a question of hours. Colonel Brey-mann, however, was near at hand; and Stark had no time to spare. He seized the moment with a practised glance, and led forward his soldiers, of whom not a few were his fellow-townsmen and his family friends, after making a very brief and stirring appeal to their

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 1 of Captain Von Eekling's *History*.

<sup>2</sup> Von Eekling; Chapter 7.

neighbourly sympathies. "Come on, my lads!" he cried. "We must get them beaten; or Molly Stark will be a widow to-night." Sword in hand, and on foot, (for his horse had been killed,) and begrimed by the powder-smoke almost beyond recognition, he looked anything rather than a lady's man. It was not a bayonet charge, for his people had no bayonets; but they came on behind him with their fowling-pieces clubbed, striking downwards like the Swiss halberdiers in their battles with Charles the Bold of Burgundy. Lord Sandwich might have altered the tone of his speaking in the House of Peers if he could have seen that flood of Yankee cowards streaming across the breastworks. Colonel Baum fell mortally wounded; and, according to the most authentic German testimony, only thirty dragoons, out of nearly four hundred, ever made their way back to Burgoyne's camp.<sup>1</sup> Major Skene, doing something to redeem his ignorance and folly by conspicuous activity in combat, had already lost four horses; and he now got safe away from a swarm of marksmen, who were bent on taking him alive, on a fifth steed which died beneath him as soon as he was outside the range of fire.

A relieving force was within sound of the cannon, and even of the musketry, for some while before the redoubt was stormed. "That misfortune," (wrote Burgoyne,) "would certainly have been avoided if Mr. Breymann could have marched at the rate of two miles an hour, any given twelve hours out of the two-and-thirty." It must, however, be borne in mind that the officer, whose conduct was thus impugned, never showed himself backward in battle. He did not live to return to Europe, and tell his own tale; his progress across country on this occasion was far from abnormally slow according to the standard observed by the British army during the Saratoga campaign; and, (for that was

<sup>1</sup> A letter from Canada, quoted in a London newspaper of November 1777, says that the Germans "stood like a stone wall until they were cut to pieces."



the real point in question,) Burgoyne should have sent Colonel Breymann and his troops *with* Colonel Baum, and not *after* him. Whether or not Breymann had idled on the way, he undoubtedly exhibited no slackness in presence of the enemy. He gave the American commander no time to re-assemble those civilian soldiers who had dispersed to revel in the joy and excitement of their victory. Six hundred light infantry and grenadiers, the choicest of Riedesel's Brunswickers, swept forward in order of battle, driving before them the groups of militiamen whom Stark and his aides-de-camp had with difficulty recalled from plundering the German baggage-carts, and picking up brass-plated sword-belts as heirlooms for their families. The final event of the day was still in suspense, and the balance had begun to incline against the Americans, when the long-expected battalion of Green Mountain Boys came marching to the rescue. Their ranks had been cruelly thinned at Hubbardtown; but the survivors were ready for another encounter on such conditions as satisfied their exaggerated self-respect, and their quaint provincialism. Seth Warner, — who, like most good American officers, was too much inclined to seek a fight for its own sake, when his strict duty should have kept him out of it, — had taken part in the assault on the intrenchment, and was missing for some time after the *mêlée* ceased. His soldiers obstinately refused to charge until they received the word of command from their own colonel; but Warner at length was found, and then he and his people went into the battle together.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was long before the men of the Hampshire Grants lost their character for indomitable, and rather troublesome, independence. In the summer of 1781 Washington requested their old general to call them into the field in order to meet a temporary emergency. "Your power," (the Commander-in-Chief wrote,) "must be unlimited amongst those people at whose head you have formerly fought and conquered with so much reputation and glory." "I shall," replied Stark, "hold a treaty with the Green Mountain Boys; but, not having seen those turbulent sons of freedom for several years, I am at a loss to determine my reception." They gave him, however, a most cordial greeting, and turned out on horseback five hundred strong.

The New Hampshire militia only wanted a lead. They crowded up to the right and left of Warner's regiment; a crashing fire broke out along both the opposing fronts; and Stark once again was in his element. The German advance was checked. Before many minutes had elapsed it became converted into a retrograde movement; and there were no troops in the world who could retreat with impunity in face of American sharpshooters. That busy and audacious individuality, which was the strength and the weakness of the Revolutionary soldier, was never so formidable as when he was in pursuit of a partly-beaten adversary. The New Englanders plied their legs briskly, and aimed with the deliberation of men who knew the cost in cents of every round that they fired. When the darkness settled down, they discharged their pieces at pistol-distance from the bushes on either side of the road, with some danger to each other, but with little or no reply from the enemy; for the retiring column had filled up with wounded, and the cooler and best disciplined privates were told off to help along their disabled comrades. Colonel Breymann hardly got away by favour of the night, after losing both his guns, and a full third of his rank and file. "Another hour of daylight," said Stark, "and I should have captured the whole body." Under those circumstances Colonel Ethan Allen would have been seriously displeased with Providence because the sun had not stood still for him, as for Joshua; but Stark was far from ill-satisfied with a success so perfectly timed to advance the welfare of his cause, and so cheaply purchased. The Americans acknowledged a hundred casualties as the price of their double triumph. They claimed, probably with truth, seven hundred prisoners, including the injured men who remained in their hands; and they certainly had taken the whole artillery which the Germans brought into the field, together with a thousand stand of arms, and swords more than enough to equip all the cavalry that could be raised within the boundaries of New Hampshire, and of Massachusetts

as well. There were dry eyes, and not a little secret or open pride and elation, wherever the story of the affair was read in English; for it was an Englishman's victory. A force of drilled and pipe-clayed foreigners, intruding where they were not wanted, had been put to the rout by English farmers, fighting in civilian costume, and with native courage, to defend the inviolability of their English homes.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile a series of moves, with an important bearing on the fate of the game, was being played in the opposite corner of the strategic chess-board. Far to the westward, on the spot where the town of Rome now stands, and at a point where the old military route from Montreal and Oswego entered the upper portion of the Mohawk Valley, Fort Stanwix was held for the Revolution by a strong garrison, under the command of an excellent officer. During the month of July, 1777, the environs of the place had been infested by those Indian warriors who formed the advance guard of Colonel St. Leger's army. The red men prowled through the thickets, killing and scalping, in the interest of the counter-revolution, soldiers who had wandered beyond the fortifications to shoot wood-pigeons, and little girls from the neighbouring farmhouses who were out of doors in search of blackberries. At the beginning of August, Colonel St. Leger himself arrived before the walls with a few companies of British Regulars, some Hessians and Canadians, and two battalions of infantry bearing the title of the Royal Greens. They had been raised in the Northern townships of New York State by Sir John Johnson, a Tory baronet; whose father, Sir William, had competed on equal terms with no less

<sup>1</sup> Lossing gives a full account of Bennington; illustrated, as always, by intelligent study of the locality, by authentic oral traditions, and by interviews with old people who remembered the war.

Stark was nearly fifty in 1777. He died at the age of ninety-two; and, during the last years of his life, he enjoyed a pension from Congress of sixty dollars a month. The real heroes of the Revolution were not burdensome to their country.

powerful a territorial magnate than Philip Schuyler for social and political leadership among the white population of that feudal region. Sir William had no rival in his influence over the Indian tribes; and his knowledge of the Indian character was enlarged, and kept up to date, by a course of life which created less scandal in his day than in ours. His mansion, — fortified, and crowded with guests and inmates, like a mediæval castle, — always contained some handsome squaws; and he had children in incredible number, and of various shades of colour. He only just lived into, and perhaps died of, the Revolution. With many faults, he was a much finer fellow than his son and successor; and his last days were saddened and distracted by a mental conflict between sincere attachment to the liberties of his Colony, and gratitude towards a Sovereign who had rewarded his frequent and valuable services with princely munificence. Sir John Johnson, unlike his father, was not a patriot, but a partisan of a singularly noxious type. He stands condemned by all honest Americans, Tories and Whigs alike, as an instigator and accomplice in the Wyoming foray, — the most horrible outrage on the helpless and the innocent which, in the long history of our race, was ever perpetrated in the name of loyalty.

The troops inside Fort Stanwix were enough to man the works; and their spirit was high, and their temper hopeful. Some of their officers had procured a sketch of the national flag recently adopted by the Continental Congress, and had manufactured a banner, resplendent with stars and stripes, out of their best coloured cloaks and their finest linen.<sup>1</sup> They had powder and lead in plenty; but their stock of provisions was far from inexhaustible, and their only communication with the outer world lay along a hundred miles of forest-track,

<sup>1</sup> A Committee was appointed by Congress "to design a suitable flag for the nation." It consisted apparently of Robert Morris and George Washington. They took into their counsels, with the best results, Mrs. Betty Ross, a leading milliner of Philadelphia, reputed to be "the finest needle-worker in America." Their design was adopted by an Act of Congress of June 14, 1777.

intersected by narrow defiles, and deep and obscure ravines. A first attempt to relieve the garrison was made by local effort. The militia of Tryon County mustered at the instance of General Herkimer, one of those tough and stout-hearted patriarchs who were so much to the front during the earlier struggles of the Revolution. Herkimer penetrated, without opposition, as far as Oriskany, a distance of only six miles from Fort Stanwix; but there he fell into an ambuscade planned and planted with consummate art by the famous Indian chief who is known to history under his English appellation of Joseph Brant. The Americans were shot down by scores. Many of them fled, and were slain as they ran. But the braver men stood their ground; the Seneca warriors, on their part, were no skulkers; and the contest was prolonged, knife to knife and muzzle to muzzle, with deadly fury and pertinacity. Oriskany, for the strength of the forces engaged, proved to be the bloodiest conflict of the entire war. Herkimer's leg had been shattered, and his horse killed; but the old man bade them place his saddle against the trunk of a spreading beech, and there he sate, erect in the middle of the tumult, — with death upon him, though perhaps he did not know it, — as cool and observant as if he were superintending the operations of a deer-hunt. He noticed that, whenever a militia-man discharged his piece, an Indian would rush in with his hatchet before there was time to reload. Herkimer accordingly stationed his soldiers behind their trees in pairs, so that, when one had fired, the other had a bullet ready for an assailant; and the great number of savages killed and wounded, as a consequence of this simple device, eventually contributed more than any other single cause to decide the campaign on the Mohawk River. While the contest in the ravine was still raging, the garrison of Fort Stanwix made a vigorous sally, beat up Sir John Johnson's quarters, secured twenty waggon-loads of spoil, sent the Royal Greens decamping in confusion, and captured five of the flags with which that corps of sinister and



inglorious memory was superabundantly provided. If those standards had remained eleven more months in the custody of the regiment, they would have been inscribed with the immortal name of Wyoming Valley. Both sides claimed to have been victors in this confused and dubious fighting; but the true character of a battle is determined by the practical and visible result; and Herkimer's militia had been so frightfully mauled that they did not think it safe to remain within many miles of St. Leger's army.<sup>1</sup>

Unless more effectual help came from some other quarter, Fort Stanwix was doomed to fall; and Philip Schuyler had not blinded himself to the inevitable consequences of that catastrophe. The terms of capitulation which Colonel St. Leger, in all good faith, was prepared to grant, might be generous and humane, and embodied in articles drawn up with minute precision; but the surrender of the place would, none the less, most probably be followed by a wholesale massacre of the garrison. The ghastly tragedy of Fort William Henry, in the last French war,—that indelible stain on the Marquis de Montcalm's fine reputation,—showed that there were certain contingencies in which the best-intentioned European commander might be powerless to save the lives of adversaries who had committed themselves to his honour; and a still more recent deed of treachery had only too clearly indicated that the most vindictive and ungovernable of all Indians belonged to that very tribe which now was beleaguering Fort Stanwix.<sup>2</sup> When the American stronghold had succumbed,

<sup>1</sup> *The Public Papers of George Clinton* contain a report of the battle at Oriskany written from the Mohawk Valley. "All accounts," (so the letter runs,) "agree that a great Number of the enemy is killed. The Flower of our Militia are either killed or wounded, except 150, who stood off by these brave men. The dead they left on the Field for want of a proper support. We will not take upon us to tell of the behaviour of the rear. So far as we know they took to flight, the first firing."

<sup>2</sup> Only fifteen months back, these same Seneca Indians had tomahawked and scalped a number of wounded American prisoners in violation of a compact of surrender.

and its defenders had been exterminated, the intoxication of success, and the hope of booty, would draw forth fresh hordes of marauders from all the villages of the Six Nations; and the mass of exulting savages would pour down the Mohawk Valley, leaving desolation in their rear, and carrying fire and death into the fertile and thickly peopled home-district which surrounded the town of Albany. Schuyler assembled a council of war, and advocated immediate and efficacious action for the relief of the imperilled fortress. But the officers whom he addressed were politicians before they were patriots or military men; and his proposal was scouted and out-voted, not so much from disapproval of the scheme as from dislike of its author. Stung by an unfair and ill-natured remark, which was meant to be overheard, Schuyler crushed the stem of his clay pipe into fragments between his teeth; ceased his gloomy, pre-occupied walk up and down the chamber; and faced the group of disloyal subordinates with resentful dignity. "Gentlemen," he said, "I shall take the responsibility upon myself. Fort Stanwix and the Mohawk Valley shall be saved. Where is the Brigadier who will command the relief?" That appeal was directed to others rather than to Benedict Arnold, for he was a Major General, and not a Brigadier; but, when work required to be done, he never stood upon his rank. He had been sent North, (he quietly said,) in order to make himself useful; and he offered Schuyler his services, which were gratefully accepted. Next morning the drums beat through the camp for volunteers; and, by noon, eight hundred men had agreed to follow wherever Arnold chose to lead them. A week's march brought him to a point less than thirty miles from Fort Stanwix. The militia of the valley, — keen for another chance at the invader, and confident that no Tory partisan, whether red or white, could lay an ambuscade which would catch General Arnold, — had rallied round him in great force; and Colonel Gansevoort, who had conducted the defence of the fort with

vigilance and resolution, was gratified by receiving an assurance that the siege would be raised long before he had served out his last biscuit.<sup>1</sup>

Although Arnold might be a fire-eater when no alternative diet could be had, he was far too good a soldier to entertain any prejudice against a bloodless victory. A Tory spy, who had been detected and arrested within the American lines, consented to save his neck by undertaking a mission which was only less dangerous than being hanged outright. The man's brother was detained as a hostage; while he himself, carefully primed and tutored, and with several bullet-holes shot through his coat, ran into the Indian camp outside Fort Stanwix with a story that General Arnold was close at his heels. When asked whether the enemy were few or many, he pointed to the forest-leaves overhead with an eloquent gesture. The Seneca warriors listened to his tale with ready belief, and profound emotion. They had marched out from their lodges in quest of plunder, and not of glory; the slaughter of their foremost tribesmen at Oriskany had depressed and disenchanted them; and they now were impatient to be gone. They would not so much as stay to make themselves drunk, in spite of Colonel St. Leger's pressing invitation. They rushed away in their usual clamorous disorder; and the panic spread to the Royal Greens, who were very poor hands at fighting with grown men, and not in the least inclined for an armed collision with Benedict Arnold. The two battalions broke their ranks and made off into the woods, shedding their knapsacks, and flinging down their muskets, — an act of improvidence which they soon found cruel reason to repent. The rest of the besiegers had no choice except to follow; and St. Leger started for Oswego without a moment's delay, leaving behind his stores, his tents, and the whole of his artillery. The humiliations and distresses of that retreat are a standing lesson on the real value of barbarian auxiliaries.

<sup>1</sup> Arnold to Gansevoort; August 22, 1777.

The red men lost all deference for their European employers; and, as savages will, they passed from familiarity to mischief and impertinence, and thence, by quick stages, to insolence, violence, and outrage. Whenever the Royal Greens threw themselves down to repose, they were hunted out of their bivouacs by an irruption of whooping Indians, and compelled to resume their exhausting journey. At length the fugitives reached the shores of Lake Ontario; but they were not permitted to embark in peace. Their boats were seized and towed away, with the reserve provisions on board; and the fiercer warriors made a deliberate onslaught upon the unarmed and defenceless Loyalists. Many were murdered and scalped; and even those whose lives were spared were in some cases stripped of all their clothing. Colonel St. Leger declared, in an official despatch, that, after fortune began to turn against him, his Indian allies were more formidable than his American enemy.<sup>1</sup> The remnant of the expedition straggled back to Canada in piteous case; and before the end of August it became evident that one, at least, of Lord George Germaine's three enveloping columns would never appear at the trysting-place in front of Albany.

<sup>1</sup> St. Leger to Burgoyne; August 27, 1777.

## CHAPTER V

### STILLWATER. BEMIS'S HEIGHTS. SARATOGA. THE VIOLATED CONVENTION

THE left and right wings of the Canadian Army had now been successively defeated, and completely swept off the board; and the fate of the invasion, from this time forward, depended exclusively upon the central column which Burgoyne led in person. He and Schuyler still faced each other in the same quarters, with the same interval of space between them; but the three weeks which had elapsed since the British reached Fort Edward had wrought a marvellous change in the relative strength, numerical and moral, of the opposing forces. Philip Schuyler played an honourable part in the vigorous policy which contributed to the amelioration of the American chances; but the principal credit was due to George Washington, who had taken the strategy of the campaign firmly and promptly in hand. He condemned the proposal "to unite all the militia, and Continental troops, in one body, and make an opposition wholly in front;" and he explained with force and lucidity the importance of acting on the flank and rear of an enemy who had thrust himself into such an adventurous and isolated position as General Burgoyne at present occupied.<sup>1</sup> Putting his theoretical advice into immediate practice, he sent General Lincoln to the Hampshire Grants with directions to fall upon the invaders from the Eastern quarter; to attack their convoys; and, (if practicable,) altogether to intercept their communications with Canada.

It was not Washington's habit to promulgate orders without supplying the means to carry those orders into

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Governor Clinton; 16 August, 1777.



execution. He himself had work before him demanding at least half again as large an army as Congress had placed at his disposal; and he was not justified in sending more than a few of his own regiments to the assistance of General Schuyler. Those, however, which he had given were of his very best; and he supplemented that sacrifice by a liberal exertion of the influence which he possessed over the affection and obedience of his compatriots. He foresaw that the contest to the North of Albany must be short and sharp, and that every right arm, which could be spared from the scythe and the sickle during the height of harvest, would be needed for the defence of the Republic. In a document, the issue of which marks a turning point in the Revolutionary War, George Washington informed New England that he relied upon her citizen-soldiers for support in that time of trial. "General Arnold, who is so well known to you all," (those were the concluding words of a concise and impressive exhortation,) "goes up at my request to take the command of the militia in particular, and I have no doubt but you will, under his conduct and direction, repel an enemy from your borders, who, not content with hiring mercenaries to lay waste your country, have now brought savages, with the avowed and expressed intention of adding murder to desolation."

Although this celebrated epistle was ostensibly addressed only to Brigadiers of Militia in the Western parts of Massachusetts and Connecticut, it was read with enthusiastic approval by the whole population of those two States. General Heath, from his headquarters at Boston, had already taken steps for sending back to their regiments in irons the recreant soldiers who had deserted Schuyler;<sup>1</sup> but, after the publication of Washington's letter, there was no longer any call for compulsory measures. The people of Massachusetts had been flattered by the appointment to high command of General Lincoln, who was universally

William Heath to George Washington; Boston, July 16, 1777.

popular in his native province; and they were fully determined that the story of Jane MacCrea should not be repeated in their own villages. They arrived at the very sound conclusion that, in order to protect their families from the Wyandot Panther and his brother warriors, the shooting must be done, not from the windows of farmhouses in the interior townships of their State, but in line of battle outside the borders of New England. Before the middle of August a sixth part of the militia of several counties marched off to reinforce the Northern army.<sup>1</sup> The pewter of the Massachusetts side-boards, — whether dishes, plates, or spoons, — was melted down into ball, and packed off for the use of the troops on the Hudson River; and the officials of Pittsfield, most of whose able-bodied fellow-townsmen had already started for the front in company with their bellicose parson, despatched to camp their last hundred-weight of gunpowder, and did not leave themselves enough "to fire an alarm" in case their neighbourhood was threatened by a hostile incursion.<sup>2</sup>

When such was the temper of Massachusetts, — which hitherto had been backward, and which lay outside the direct line of Burgoyne's projected advance, — it may well be believed that apathy did not prevail in the province where the war was raging. The Council of Safety for New York State placed their sons and their treasure unreservedly in the hands of the stout soldier whom they had recently elected as their Governor. General George Clinton had already taken their consent for granted. Fifteen hundred militiamen from the nearest counties were on their road to Albany. A requisition had been made for a force of five hundred infantry to protect Schuyler's rear; and eight hundred were at once levied and despatched. Clinton told his Brigadiers of militia that every man who could bear

<sup>1</sup> William Heath to John Nixon; Headquarters, Boston, Aug. 16, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel William Williams to Ezekiel Cheever; Pittsfield, Aug. 17, 1777.

arms must on this occasion be brought into the field, and no person exempted whose services were wanted. "For which," he wrote, "you are not to wait for any further and more particular order."<sup>1</sup>

Very generous help came from a more distant region, where patriotic ardour and wrath had for some months past been at fever-heat. The fiery cross had been sent far and wide through Connecticut; but it was not kindled by American hands. That conflagration of private dwellings which took place in the town of Danbury excited, and may almost be said to have madened, the whole population of the province.

"We thought to fire but farm-steads. We have lit  
A flame less transient in the hearts of men."

So the agents who carried out Governor Tryon's vindictive behests might with good reason have boasted; for they proved themselves the most effective recruiting-officers in the service of Congress. Three thousand citizens of the outraged State had already marched to swell the Army of Reserve which was stationed under General Putnam at Peekskill in the central Highlands; and a battalion of infantry was told off to reinforce the garrison of Providence, in order that the enlightened and prosperous little capital of Rhode Island might be safe from the destruction which overtook so many other sea-side towns and villages. Considerable numbers of the Connecticut militia had repaired to the aid of Colonel Stark at Bennington; and some among them arrived in time for the battle.<sup>2</sup> And yet, after listening favourably to requests for support from so many quarters, Jonathan Trumbull was not deaf to the cry of distress which reached him from beyond the Hudson River. The old Puritan gentleman assured General Schuyler that he should not be forsaken in his day of

<sup>1</sup> George Clinton to General Schuyler, and to Brigadier General Ten Broeck; both of August 2nd, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Trumbull to Horatio Gates; Hartford, 21st of August, 1777.

peril ; and he carried with him the public opinion of the province which he administered. The Committeemen of the County of Albany had put forth an importunate, but not undignified, invocation to the sympathies of Connecticut. They recalled the circumstance that, when New England was in danger, the State of New York had come forward spontaneously to the rescue. "Our country," they wrote, "is now invaded ; but where are our Eastern friends ? What have we done to forfeit their esteem ?" When that letter was received at Litchfield, — the nearest large town in Connecticut to the seat of war, — the local Committee was called together, and an answer transmitted by return of post. There was no time to correct the spelling, and possibly no sense of any need that such correction was required ; but the rarest literary skill could not have added force or clearness to the unhesitating and unconditional pledge, which the reply contained, that, come what might, the States of New York and Connecticut should stand or fall together.<sup>1</sup> Those were not empty words. General Schuyler had asked Governor Trumbull for a thousand troops. The response came in the shape of two hundred cavalry, and two strong, well-officered regiments of musketeers ; and, before many weeks were out, the Connecticut militia had done their duty bravely in that furious and equal battle of the nineteenth of September which tested the relative fighting quality of Englishmen and Americans as it never had been tested before, and as, by the mercy of God, it will never in the future be tested again.

<sup>1</sup> The answer of Litchfield to the circular from Albany was signed at six P.M. on the 4th August, 1777. "Yours of the First Instant," (so it commenced,) "respecting the alarming Situation of our northern affairs never reached us before this moment. Surely, Gentlemen, we shall never be backward in affording every Possible aid in our power for the Relief of the County of Albany. We are not so narrow and Contracted as not to extend every assistance as well to the Inhabatents of a sister state as to those of our own ; nor do we imagine that we our selfs can long be safe whilst Desolation and Conquest over spread your State. In short our Feelings are such that we would run every Hazzard, and risque every danger, for you that we should for ourselves."

The importance which Washington attached to the campaign against Burgoyne may be estimated by the fact that he deprived himself, for General Schuyler's benefit, of a small body of troops who, since fire-arms were invented, never perhaps had their equals, man for man, unless it were the Ninety Fifth Regiment of Lord Wellington's Peninsular army. The American Commander-in-Chief informed the Governor of New York State that he was forwarding, as fast as possible, Colonel Morgan's corps of five hundred riflemen. "I expect," (he said,) "the most eminent services from them; and I shall be mistaken if their presence does not go far towards producing a general desertion among the savages. I should think it well, even before their arrival, to begin to circulate these ideas, with proper embellishments, throughout the country and in the army, and to take pains to communicate them to the enemy;" and Washington, — a great master of artifice, in its proper place, — added that it would not be amiss to magnify their numbers.<sup>1</sup> Their value in war it was impossible to exaggerate. History knows them as Morgan's Virginians; but fully two-thirds of them were from the Western frontier of Pennsylvania, and two-thirds of those were Scotch-Irish, who traced back their descent to Ulster. The rest were German settlers of the hardier sort, grateful to the democratic government which had afforded them an asylum from religious persecution, and from the liability to be sold as military slaves for the personal profit of an impecunious Prince Bishop or Grand Elector.<sup>2</sup> At a period when the European private was hampered for travel and conflict by a burden of complicated accoutrements which to modern notions is hardly credible, and altogether

<sup>1</sup> General Washington to Governor Clinton; 16th August, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Kephart relates that when Morgan was asked which race, of those composing the American army, were the best soldiers, he replied: "As for the fighting part of the matter, they are pretty much alike. They fight as much as they find necessary, and no more. But, Sir, for the grand essential give me the Dutchman. He starves well."



ridiculous, the American rifleman went about his business unencumbered, and in rational attire. Every article, (we are told,) in his scanty outfit was cut down to the last practicable ounce, save only the long barrel of his rifle.<sup>1</sup> He wore the hunting-shirt and, in winter, embroidered buckskin leggings in a single piece; but during the heats of summer the men for the most part adopted the Indian breech-clout, the most elementary garment consistent with the demands of propriety that has been in use since the Fall of Man.<sup>2</sup> In the warfare of the forest these backwoodsmen moved among the litter of dry leaves, and brittle twigs, shod with the silent moccasin; and on the march they picked their way securely over slippery logs, and along dizzy mountain-tracks, in that most supple and durable of foot-gear. Their commissariat was limited to a walletful of jerked venison and powdered Indian corn; and their commander steadfastly refused all offers of wheeled transport as incompatible with the efficiency of a genuine light infantry. Thus equipped and provisioned they had been known to cover five hundred and fifty miles in twenty-two days, and even six hundred miles within the three weeks. Most of their officers carried rifles; and the privates underwent a searching test in practical shooting before they were admitted into the ranks. No one was accounted a marksman who could not hit a very small object, with absolute certainty, at the range of sixty yards; and English prisoners saw with astonishment Virginian riflemen holding a piece of board at arm's length, or

<sup>1</sup> Kephart's *Birth of the American Army*.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan himself wore the breech-clout during Benedict Arnold's fearful midwinter march through the Maine wilderness to Quebec. When George Washington was serving against the French, in 1758, he held a strong opinion on this subject. "If I were left," he said, "to pursue my own inclinations, I would not only order the men to adopt the Indian dress, but cause the officers to do it also, and be the first to set the example myself." In the full trappings of the costume he would have made a most majestic Sachem.

even between their thighs, as a target for their comrades.<sup>1</sup>

Schuyler had by this time recovered, — or, to speak more accurately, had acquired, — the confidence of his soldiers. The military situation was fast becoming little short of excellent. General Lincoln, with two thousand infantry, watched his opportunity to pounce upon Ticonderoga; smaller bands of well-armed partisans already made themselves busy and troublesome at this point, or that, of Burgoyne's communications; and Stark, who now at last had been made a Major General, wrote that he was coming into camp with the heroes of Bennington. A few days more, and Arnold would be back from the Mohawk, bringing his eight hundred volunteers, intact and jubilant, as well as a large contingent of militia from Tryon County whose services were no longer required for the defence of their homes. Whenever the shock of battle came Schuyler would be able to put in line ten thousand men, many of whom had recently fought and conquered; while the rest were stirred to emulation by the two notable victories which had been gained, (as his friends and admirers might reasonably claim,) under his auspices. A marked change had taken place in the feeling entertained by the New England troops towards a general who had learned to treat them with the consideration and the civility which they regarded as their due, and who fed them always well, and sometimes at his own cost. Philip Schuyler had retrieved his reputation in the eyes of every fair and unprejudiced man; but unfortunately such men were not a majority in

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Anburey's 68th letter, "from Jones's Plantation, near Charlottesville in Virginia;" Aug. 4, 1779. His evidence on this point is borne out by many witnesses of similar feats. On one such occasion the men proposed to shoot apples off each other's heads; but the spectators would not permit it.

A year from this time Lafayette, at the head of a detached force which included some of Morgan's people, gained a success over the Hessians. "I ought to tell you," he wrote to Washington, "that the riflemen ran the whole day in front of my horse without eating or resting."

Congress. The improved condition of the Northern army sorely disturbed the minds of his political adversaries, who were in a hurry to ruin him before he had the opportunity of winning a victory which would establish him permanently and inexpugnably in the gratitude of his countrymen. An apt weapon for their purpose lay within easy reach; for General Gates now almost lived in the lobbies of the House. His two fixed ideas were his own re-instatement in command, and Schuyler's downfall; and he was encircled by flatterers and dependents who did not allow either his ambition, or his resentment, to slumber. His principal staff-officer was Colonel Wilkinson, a youth of extravagant pretensions and very poor qualities, — the fitting jackal for such a lion. He fetched and carried for Gates while that general's fortunes were in the ascendant, and betrayed him as soon as ever those fortunes showed the first signs of waning. Like master, like man; and the moral and intellectual relation of James Wilkinson to Alexander Hamilton was much the same as that of Horatio Gates to George Washington.

When General Schuyler, in the early June of 1777, was restored to the Northern army, Wilkinson encouraged his own chief to view the action of Congress as a personal outrage on his dignity and his deserts. "They have injured themselves;" (he wrote;) "they have insulted you; and by so doing they have been guilty of the foulest ingratitude." It was no hard matter even for a foolish aide-de-camp to push Gates across the narrow confines of his self-control. He hurried away to Philadelphia, and, on what was little better than a false pretence, he obtained leave to address Congress. His speech was entirely concerned with personal topics, and unbecoming to the last degree. After a while the New York members moved that the General should be ordered to withdraw. A debate ensued, and speedily degenerated into an unseemly tumult. Gates remained standing on the floor, and took his part among the noisiest; but at last, with much difficulty, he was got

outside the doors. Such an exhibition would have been fatal to the military career of any ordinary man; but the New England delegates forgave anything, and everything, to one whom they regarded as a favourite son. His friends continued to work on his behalf indefatigably, and in the end successfully. Schuyler was deprived of his command; and, on the nineteenth of August, Gates arrived at Albany with a commission to supersede him.

To his great surprise, he found himself very far from universally welcome. Arnold and Lincoln had come North, at Washington's earnest request, for the express purpose of strengthening Schuyler's hands; and they were taken aback by being called upon, at a moment's notice, and for no intelligible public object, to transfer their loyalty to a man whom they neither liked nor trusted. Gates was still less acceptable to the private soldiers; for they knew him only as an absentee general who, all through the previous winter, had displayed the most heartless indifference to the sufferings of his famished and death-stricken army. Nothing except the unsparing exertion of John Stark's personal influence kept the brigades which had fought at Bennington from marching straight home to New Hampshire. Schuyler himself received his successor in a friendly manner, and with proffers of counsel and support which were churlishly rejected. It has been well said that the supreme of good taste rarely had more perfect illustration than in Philip Schuyler's conduct at this trying moment, and throughout the many years of life which still remained to him. "Whether the Resolution of Congress," (so he wrote to George Washington,) "at this critical juncture was a wise one, time must determine. I shall go on doing my duty, and endeavouring to deserve your esteem." That pledge was nobly kept. Schuyler's modest self-effacement under the infliction of a cruel wrong, and his continued devotion to the national cause when the triumph of that cause could no longer bring glory or

profit to himself, are an indisputable title to the respect of posterity.

Meanwhile the personal relations between the British general and his subordinates were in honourable contrast to the jealousies which overset Schuyler, Fraser, and Phillips, and Hamilton were heartily loyal to Burgoyne. They attributed to his skill in leadership those successes which had marked the opening of the campaign; and they did not hold him responsible for the manifold difficulties and dangers which now encompassed the army. No one aspired to displace him in his command; and, indeed, the situation was such that the most ambitious and self-reliant of military men would have been disinclined to envy him. For by this time Burgoyne was painfully aware that the Ministry at home, deluded by their own obstinate preconceptions, and misled by erroneous information, had sent him, very ill-provided, on an all but hopeless mission. Those resources of local Toryism, which occupied so large a space in letters addressed to Cabinet Ministers from their correspondents in America, proved to be scanty and unreliable within the boundaries of New York State; and on the East of the Hudson River they were altogether non-existent. The country, indeed, had risen; but not for the King. Burgoyne very soon found occasion to tell Lord George Germaine that there was daily reason to doubt the sincerity and the resolution of professing Loyalists. "I have," he said, "about four hundred, (but not half of them armed,) who may be depended upon. The rest are trimmers merely actuated by interest. The great bulk of the country is undoubtedly with the Congress, in principle and in zeal; and their measures are executed with a secrecy and despatch that are not to be equalled. The Hampshire Grants in particular, a country unpeopled and almost unknown in the last war, now abounds in the most active and most rebellious race of the Continent,



and hangs like a gathering storm upon my left.”<sup>1</sup> For the space of thirty leagues along the flank of Burgoyne’s advance the land was inhabited by that martial population from which the Green Mountain Boys had been recruited; and five or six thousand royal infantry, stationed in rear of his marching army, would have been none too many to keep him in touch with Canada. But the troops whom Burgoyne could spare for the protection of his communications were so few that he might as well have spared none at all. His small and isolated garrisons seldom ventured to stir outside their fortifications, and did not even feel very safe within them. He was soon entirely cut off from England. The last despatches which he thought it safe to transmit northwards left his headquarters at Fort Edward in the first week of September; and the last which came to hand in Downing Street were dated the twentieth August.<sup>2</sup>

Burgoyne’s fighting strength had been very seriously drained by losses in battle, and by the necessity of detaching troops enough to make at least an appearance of guarding his communications. He had now with him seven hundred Provincials, who were good for very little; seventeen hundred Germans; some twenty score artillery men; and only three thousand effective British infantry. In numbers they were a forlorn hope rather than an invading host; but their spirit was such that the honour of our country would, in the worst event, be safe in their keeping. Their discipline and valour left nothing to be desired; but certain incidents in the recent action at Hubbardtown aroused anxiety in the minds of those who had closely and intelligently watched the character of the fighting.

<sup>1</sup> Burgoyne to Lord George Germaine; Aug. 20, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Burgoyne, gentleman that he was, had resolved that at the very earliest opportunity General Riedesel should see something of the wife who had come all the way from Brunswick to be with him, and he despatched an officer to escort Madame Riedesel to the camp. According to the lady’s account she reached Fort Edward on the 18th August, and a few days after her arrival news came that the army was cut off from Canada.

The British officers who had been shot were ominously many in proportion to our loss of rank and file. The American rifle-balls, as was only too evident, did not fly at random; while, except in the picked companies of Light Infantry, the majority of our soldiers were very far short of taking rank as marksmen. It was not their own fault. The experience of two contested campaigns ought to have brought home to every colonel, who had a soul above that of a drill-sergeant, the vast difference between the conditions of American and European warfare; and the long leisure of winter-quarters should have been devoted by our company officers to instructing the private in the familiar and efficient use of his firelock. Too much was said at our mess-tables about the superiority of our own people when it came to a push of bayonet. The just reputation of that weapon, at the muzzle of an English musket, would have been maintained by Burgoyne's regiments against any infantry that ventured to meet them in line or column; but it was quite another matter where the arena of conflict was obstructed, at frequent intervals, by a labyrinth of fallen trunks, and entangled branches, through which Morgan's Scouts, and Stark's lumbermen from the White Mountains of New Hampshire, could travel three yards for every two that were accomplished by their adversaries.<sup>1</sup> Such a consideration, however, troubled very few officers, and none of the common men; and the idea of a forward movement was all the more popular because it was confidently anticipated that, as soon as Burgoyne attacked the rebels in front, Sir William Howe would assail and overwhelm them in the rear.

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Anburey, from observations made at the battle of Hubbardtown, came to the conclusion that our manual exercise was "but an ornament," and that the only object of real importance was to teach the soldier to load coolly, and aim steadily. "The confusion," (he wrote,) "of a man's ideas during the time of action, brave as he may be, is undoubtedly great. Several of the men, upon examining their muskets, after all was over, found five or six cartridges which they were positive to having discharged."

That belief was of faith, and not of knowledge. On the thirtieth July, under private seal to Lord George Germaine, Burgoyne made a statement of the utmost gravity. "I have spared," he wrote, "no pains to open a correspondence with Sir William Howe. I have employed the most enterprising characters, and offered very promising rewards; but of ten messengers sent at different times, and by different routes, not one is returned to me, and I am in total ignorance of the situation or intentions of that General." The most that Burgoyne had been able to ascertain was that two of his own couriers had been hanged; and he conjectured that the same fate had overtaken all the emissaries who were bringing him letters from the Commander-in-Chief of our southern army. If he waited for news from Sir William Howe, he might wait till doomsday. To remain where he was, meant starvation. A retreat towards Canada would be inglorious, most certainly perilous, and perhaps impracticable. Safety, honour, and plenty lay in front, if they lay anywhere; and, from the general in command to the smallest drummer-boy, the one and sole desire of the whole British army was to keep advancing until they ran up against the enemy.

Burgoyne only stayed until he had amassed provisions enough to serve him as far as Albany; and on the thirteenth September he crossed the Hudson River on a solid bridge of boats. Our army lay that evening hard by the village of Saratoga, some ten miles to the eastward of the famous modern watering-place which goes by the name of Saratoga Springs.<sup>1</sup> The view from camp reminded our officers of the fairest, and most visibly prosperous, scenes in their own country; and some of them felt a movement of generous compassion for the unhappy people who had been scared, perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Readers will do well to consult the large-scale, partially coloured, map of Saratoga and Bemis's Heights at the end of this chapter. It has been carefully prepared, and will, (it is hoped,) render the last stage of the campaign completely intelligible.

for ever, from their beautiful home. Immediately to the south meandered a rivulet broken into artificial cascades, and trained around tiny wooded islands; in obedience to that theory of the picturesque which was fashionable during the third quarter of the Eighteenth Century. On the opposite bank the Schuyler mansion stood at the head of a lawn inclining gently downwards to the stream. Beds of fruit-trees and vegetables, bordered by great masses of bright flowers, had been arranged in the English taste by gardeners imported from Europe; and the house itself, — two-storied, and of spacious dimensions, — showed “a row of imposing pillars extending its entire length from ground to roof.” The architecture resembled that of Washington’s Virginian abode; and the domestic life, and rural industries, of Philip Schuyler’s establishment were organised on the same lines as at Mount Vernon, but on a far larger scale. A regular service of sloops, laden with produce, had been used to ply to and fro between Schuylerville and the Southern markets; the ploughmen, the millers, the foresters, and the artisans in the General’s employment were counted by hundreds; and his home-farm was as large as the entire estate of a rich English squire. His celebrated cornfields, glowing with ripened grain, extended for three continuous miles along the alluvial flats of the Hudson River. Most of the crop was still standing, a legitimate prize of war; and within the next twenty-four hours the wheat had been cut for the use of our regimental bakers, and the maize as forage for our horses.<sup>1</sup> Through this smiling region Burgoyne moved in the direction of Albany at the rate of one mile a day; for the provident diligence

<sup>1</sup> Madame Schuyler had paid a flying visit to her country-house in the hope of rescuing the choicest pieces in her fine collection of furniture. Before returning to Albany, in the spirit of a matron of ancient Rome, she set fire to the corn with her own hand. Her negro attendant was paralysed by his distress at the notion of so much good hominy being wasted; and the lady’s unassisted efforts at destruction, though they have been commemorated by painters and engravers as a notable example of patriotism, produced very limited results.

of his American adversary had spoiled the roads, and laid every bridge in ruins. Parallel to the line of march, a fleet of nearly two hundred barges dropped down the Hudson, carrying the baggage, the ordnance-stores, and a month's supply of food. The money value of their cargo amounted to a king's ransom; for, (according to an elaborate calculation which found its way into London newspapers,) every pound of salt meat on board that flotilla had already cost British taxpayers the sum of thirty shillings.

Burgoyne moved slowly; but he had no great distance to traverse, inasmuch as the enemy had come halfway to meet him. Straight across his path, two leagues to the south of Saratoga, and nearly as far to the north of Stillwater, rose an abrupt table-land with a front of three quarters of a mile, separated from the Hudson River by a strip of low-lying pasture not five hundred yards across. This very defensible ridge, known as Bemis's Heights, had been selected by Benedict Arnold for the site of an intrenchment. Thaddeus Kosciuszko — an exile from Poland for a love-story, and not for politics — had placed his rare gifts at the service of a less ill-starred Revolution than that with which his name is romantically and pathetically associated. Throwing into the duties of a military engineer his fiery energy, and something of his national tendency towards the grandiose, he had crowned Bemis's Heights with a stronghold which resembled a citadel rather than a temporary field-work. The events that ensued present a striking illustration of the fatal attraction which the apparent security of a fortress has so often exercised upon the mind of a timid and incompetent general. Gates had many more troops than Burgoyne, and his parapets and ditches were impregnable as against direct assault. He had regiments enough, over and above the garrison of his solid earthworks, to prolong his line of battle so far to the westward that the British would be unable to turn the American left, or even to save themselves from being out-flanked and surrounded.



But such a conception was altogether beyond the moral and intellectual faculties of this miserable self-seeker; and he disposed his army in such a fashion that, if he had been abandoned to himself, he could not have escaped defeat and disgrace, and very probably would have been overtaken by a crushing disaster. His plan of action, so far as it was permitted to develop itself, consisted in cooping up all his brigades either inside his breastworks, or on the narrow flat between the hill and the river. There, in the insensate belief that his adversaries would run their heads, wantonly and obstinately, against his impenetrable bulwarks, he awaited the approach of a hostile force admirably trained in manoeuvres, and conducted by a thorough soldier who had not in his whole nature a single particle of stupidity.

Burgoyne, who was well-read in military history, must have been reminded of the Duke of Marlborough's great opportunity at Blenheim, where the French commander had crowded a score of battalions into a barricaded village on his extreme flank, with their backs to a deep river. But now Marshal Tallard was outdone by General Gates, who had concentrated behind fortifications, in one corner of his position, not the fourth part, but the whole, of his army; and who did not think it necessary to have any left wing, or any centre, at all. Although fully aware that he was greatly outnumbered, Burgoyne nevertheless despaired the possibility of a very brilliant success; and he adopted the proper measures for obtaining it. His left wing, including the German contingent, and all the heavy artillery, was entrusted to General Phillips, who would know when to hold his hand, and how and where to strike. On the right wing General Fraser was to march with the Grenadiers and Light Infantry; while Burgoyne, at the head of four slender English battalions, and as many field-pieces, placed himself in the centre, where the fighting promised to be hottest. The scheme of battle had been maturely considered and concerted between the leaders of the three columns. Phillips undertook

to keep Gates in play. In the meantime Burgoyne and Fraser would occupy the high ground immediately to west of that intrenched enclosure in which the Americans were penned, enfilade their lines with cannon, assail them with the bayonet in flank and rear, and push their ill-commanded and disheartened army into and across the Hudson River. Victory could not fail to produce immense captures of men and material, as well as a greater reward yet; for the road would be open to Albany.<sup>1</sup>

Those were Burgoyne's hopes, and, (with such a sorry tactician in face of him,) they may even be called his reasonable expectations; but Gates was fated to be saved, in spite of himself, from the worst consequences of his own fatuity. All through the morning of the nineteenth September the glitter of steel weapons, and the passage of scarlet uniforms across vistas in the forest, indicated to American scouts that something important was afoot within the British lines; and very early in the afternoon three loud explosions, at strictly measured intervals, were recognised in both camps as a signal for the onset. Gates issued no orders, and evinced no disposition to operate outside his ramparts; but General Arnold, a very formidable petitioner, "begged and entreated" to be allowed to assume the offensive with at least a portion of his own Division.<sup>2</sup> He gave his superior officer no peace until he had extorted a sulky and grudging permission to march against the advancing enemy with Morgan's riflemen, and a scanty detachment of Massachusetts infantry. Arnold looked the soldier, from head to heel, as he urged his charger down the western slope of Bemis's Heights. He was of dark complexion, with black hair and light eyes, of athletic build and middling stature. "There wasn't

<sup>1</sup> Gates had a bridge over the Hudson; but, if the Americans were beaten, their retreat would have to be effected under the fire of General Phillips's battering guns, with Burgoyne's infantry closing in upon them from behind.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Colonel Varick from camp; September 22, 1777.

any waste timber in him. He was our fighting general. It was 'Come on, boys!' It wasn't, 'Go, boys!' He didn't care for nothing. He'd ride right in." That was a description of Benedict Arnold, given many years afterwards by one of those New Englanders who on this occasion followed him into action. It would have been well for him if, at sun-down on that autumn evening, he had been laid,—dead, safe, and honoured,—in a warrior's grave.

The country into which Arnold led his people was singularly adapted for assisting an audacious general to make a good fight against superior numbers; and he was so weak-handed as to need all advantages that the ground could give him. He was among a wilderness of trees and undergrowth, deeply scored by ravines, and interspersed here and there with open patches of grass which the farmers in those parts denominated "clever meadows." Everything was in favour of the belligerent who was most at home in the woods; and the Americans, without hesitation,—and, in the first stage of the conflict, with an excess of temerity,—flung themselves against the right wing of the Royal army. The Canadian and Indian skirmishers, who covered General Fraser's front, were driven in, and required very little driving; but so headlong was Morgan's charge that his men got out of hand, and were scattered far and wide through the thicket. Some of them were cut off and captured; and, when our picked companies of Grenadiers and Light Infantry joined in the fray, the British musketry became too sustained and well-directed for the Americans to face. It is impossible, after the lapse of a century and a quarter, to ascertain the exact particulars of a complicated struggle where the combatants who were engaged could seldom see ten yards in front of them; but it is certain that, in this quarter of the field, Arnold could make no progress, and was hard put to it in order to hold his own.

The next phase of the affair, however, was definite enough; and the clearest statement of it is by an English

historian who then served as a non-commissioned officer in Burgoyne's army. The Americans, (so ex-Sergeant Lamb wrote,) found themselves unable to penetrate at the point where they began the attack; and they accordingly "countermarched, and directed their principal effort against the centre."<sup>1</sup> That section of the Royal army was posted in some cultivated enclosures surrounding a small dwelling-house called Freeman's Farm. It was a clearing in the forest, of oblong shape, three hundred yards in extent from east to west, sloping gently southwards, and skirted everywhere by dense and lofty timber. Here General Hamilton, under Burgoyne's own eye, had stationed his guns, and drawn up the four battalions which composed his brigade. The Twentieth, the Twenty-first, and the Sixty-second were ranked in front; and the Ninth was in support. Arnold had meanwhile been joined by some other portions of his own command, — New Hampshire men, New Yorkers, and a strong and very eager regiment from Connecticut; and Colonel Morgan, who at one time found himself almost alone in the woods with something like despair at his heart, lustily sounded his "turkey call," and once more collected the most of his rifle-men around him.<sup>2</sup>

There, at three in the afternoon, commenced the real battle; and a stiff bout it was. Senior officers, who had witnessed the hardest fighting that the Seven Years' War had to show, declared that they never experienced so long and hot a fire. Burgoyne earned admiration by his serene courage, and his cool and business-like attention to the military necessities of the moment amidst a whirlpool of peril and confusion. The opposing parties surged backwards and forwards across the narrow space between them; and the attack

<sup>1</sup> *An original and authentic Journal of Occurrences during the late American War*; by R. Lamb, late Sergeant in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Dublin; 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan habitually employed, in place of a bugle, the bird-call by which Western hunters lured the wild turkeys within rifle-shot.

and defence were sometimes intermingled for many minutes together. A couple of hundred Connecticut militiamen, in a hurry to settle accounts for the burning of Danbury, advanced so deep into the British position that half of them were killed or taken. Some noted American marksmen perched themselves among the upper branches of high trees, and used their rifles with terrible accuracy. Of twenty British officers struck by bullets at Freeman's Farm, ten were shot dead. Next morning three subalterns of the Twentieth Regiment, none of whom had reached the age of seventeen, were interred in the same grave. Those of our battalions which stood in the first line lost three hundred and fifty out of a total strength of eight hundred. By the end of the fourth hour not seventy privates remained unhurt in the ranks of the Sixty-second. Thirty-six of our forty-eight artillerymen were slain or disabled, and their battery was several times over-run by a swarm of American infantry.<sup>1</sup> Victory was for the general who could most promptly bring up the largest reserves; but the reinforcements that Gates had already sparingly doled out were the last which he allowed Arnold to receive.<sup>2</sup> He himself, with numerous brigades of fresh and zealous soldiers at his disposal, refused even to make a demonstration for the purpose of distracting, and detaining in his front, the left wing of the British army. As soon, therefore, as General Phillips became convinced that Gates did not mean fighting, he marched, like a trusty comrade, towards the noise of the cannon; and, (a very

<sup>1</sup> The Americans were unable to make use of the abandoned field-pieces, because they had no means of igniting the powder. On each occasion the British artillery-men carried away the linstocks, and brought them back again when the enemy were repulsed, and the guns recovered. After the captain of the battery had fallen, his successor in command "had his cap shot off whilst spiking the cannon."

<sup>2</sup> On this point the military writers of both nations are all in the same story. Mr. John Fortescue, in the Eleventh chapter of his Third volume, says that, if Gates had supplied the additional troops for which he was asked, "Arnold must certainly have broken the British centre."



welcome surprise for Burgoyne,) he brought cannon with him.<sup>1</sup> A battery of field-pieces, with ammunition-boxes full, and the gunners all alive and unwounded, discharged grape at musket-range among the scattered groups of exhausted Americans. The vanguard of Riedesel's Brunswickers next appeared upon the scene. Seven companies of German infantry advanced into action at the double; and General Phillips, by his personal exertions and example, rallied and led forward the Twentieth, an old Minden regiment which still contained some veterans with whom he had stirring memories in common. Arnold had now done all that man could do. When night settled down upon the carnage and the uproar, he abandoned his ground, and fell back a few furlongs; which, in that blind and tangled region, took him as much out of harm's way as if his retreat had been extended over as many miles.

On the nineteenth September victory, technically speaking, rested with Burgoyne; inasmuch as the ground which he retained, as the prize of a desperate encounter, lay a mile and a half in front of the camp whence he had gone forth to battle. But the general of a nation which looks back with pride upon many notable and decisive triumphs sets little store on a small and doubtful success when he is not in a position to pursue, and improve, his advantage. Burgoyne had made arrangements for renewing active operations at day-break on the twentieth; but General Fraser represented to him that the Grenadiers and Light Infantry, who were to lead the attack, were too fatigued to behave with their customary spirit; and General Hamilton's regiments, for the time being, could not be taken into account as a fighting force. In the quarter where that gallant brigade had stood the sun went down, and rose, upon a melancholy scene. The fields were thickly strewn with dead bodies, and with a mul-

<sup>1</sup> Burgoyne, in his public despatches, warmly acknowledged the services rendered by the Artillery; as has not always been done by more fortunate, and much more famous, captains.

titude of wounded whom it had been impossible to remove so long as the conflict lasted. Our officers were reminded by certain grim incidents that they were not now campaigning in the civilised plains of Germany. Large packs of wolves made night hideous by their howls. Indians prowled through the surrounding forest, scalping the dead and dying who had fallen among the brushwood, and were with difficulty restrained from invading that open space, covered with English bodies, where the prey which they coveted was to be found in the greatest abundance. There was no time to lose; and friends and foes were buried together, hastily, and for the most part very unceremoniously. Burgoyne had persuaded himself, against the evidence of his acute and practised eyes, that the enemy had suffered far more heavily than his own army. He reported the American loss, in an official letter, at two thousand men; which was six times the real figure, and more than two-thirds of the entire force that Benedict Arnold had been able to bring into action.

Burgoyne was always wiser than his own despatches; and the tactics which he actually adopted did not indicate a genuine belief that he had made a great slaughter of his opponents with a comparatively small sacrifice of his own soldiers. He countermanded the orders which he had issued for an aggressive movement; and the energies of his army were thenceforward diverted to the construction of fortifications. During the coming fortnight relays of a thousand men were constantly at work with spade, and saw, and hatchet. On the river-bank, in rear of our camp, three redoubts protected the hospitals, the magazines, and the landing-place of the barges. The face of the British position, only a cannon-shot from the American lines, was covered by a ditch and parapet; heavy guns, of which Burgoyne possessed a great store, were disposed in battery at frequent intervals along the entire front; and the timber was felled over a breadth of several hundred paces, so as to present a clear field for the play of

artillery. Every battalion was expected to be under arms a full hour before dawn.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Breymann's Hessians, who had acquired deserved credit by their behaviour in the recent engagement, were stationed on the extreme right. Freeman's Farm, a dearly-bought acreage, for which it was likely that there would soon again be eager bidders, was committed to the charge of Lord Balcarres; while on the left flank towards the river, in comparative security, were quartered General Hamilton's extenuated regiments. Their ranks had been replenished by a large infusion of Provincial Loyalists; and some weeks of hard drilling, at the very least, were indispensably necessary before the new drafts could be brought up to the standard of the best English infantry. At sunset on the twenty-first September there was a general discharge of artillery from the American batteries, followed by "a great stir and shouting" which lasted all through the night. The cause of this unusual demonstration was not known in the British camp until, four days subsequently, a cornet of Brunswick Dragoons, who had been taken at Bennington, was sent across the lines with a message from Gates. This young officer brought word that General Lincoln had swooped down upon Burgoyne's communications; had made himself master of Sugar Hill, and other outworks of Ticonderoga; and had captured three hundred prisoners, as well as several gun-boats, and the whole of the nine or ten score barges which were employed on Lake Champlain in transporting Commissariat and Ordnance Stores for the use of Burgoyne's fighting army. All our detached posts had been successively attacked. In some cases the assailants were repelled and very roughly handled; but the three or four Royal garrisons, which survived Lincoln's

<sup>1</sup> At this point in the progress of the narrative Colonel Gerald Boyle placed in the hands of the author his manuscript *Notes on the War of the American Revolution*. Those notes, under a modest title, form a comprehensive store-house of accurate information, arranged with admirable clearness, and illustrated by sound, and most perceptive, observations and criticisms.

inroad, were cooped up helplessly within forts and block-houses, or on small islands in a sheet of water engirdled by an unfriendly shore.

Burgoyne had now been effectually cut off from Canada; and the whole land that lay to the South of him was an unknown country, enveloped in a cloud of mystery through which he dimly discerned the menacing features of an immense disappointment. There began to be something oppressive in the almost unbroken silence maintained by that personage with whose intentions and proceedings it was an affair of life and death for him to be acquainted. In the middle of September he had received a letter from Sir William Howe, dated two full months back; and not a syllable before or since. This despatch was culpably,—and, (considering Burgoyne's situation,) almost cruelly,—vague and brief. Howe foreshadowed, rather than announced, a plan of marching into Pennsylvania, and thereby adding another hundred miles to the hundred and fifty which already separated him from Burgoyne's army. Sir Henry Clinton, in the meanwhile, was to be left in command at New York; and, (to employ Howe's own careless and nebulous words,) "would act as occurrences might direct." Some days afterwards one of Clinton's messengers arrived with three meagre, and most disheartening, lines of cipher. Sir Henry expressed himself as willing, under certain contingencies, to move North with as large a handful of troops as could safely be borrowed from the garrison of New York city.<sup>1</sup> That was a very different matter from the fine army of twenty thousand British soldiers whom, (if there had been any truth in Lord George Germaine's promises, or any forethought and precision in his military arrangements,) Burgoyne was to have found awaiting him at

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Clinton's letter ran as follows. "You know my poverty; but if with 2,000 men, which is all I can spare from this important post, I can do anything to facilitate your operations, I will make an attack upon Fort Montgomery, if you will let me know your wishes." Fort Montgomery was a Republican stronghold on the Hudson River, a hundred miles to the South of Albany.

Albany. Reading the two despatches together, the unhappy general came to the conclusion that Sir William Howe had forgotten all about him. With very bad news in rear, and worse than no news from his front, he was at a loss to determine the quarter towards which his strategical efforts ought henceforward to be directed. The impulse which had borne him thus far on his career gradually died away; and he lingered, passive and stationary, at the spot where he had halted,—praying for some unlikely turn of fortune, consuming his limited reserve of provisions, and putting a few last touches of perfection to his elaborate intrenchments.

Burgoyne could complete his preparations for defence at the greater leisure because a quarrel, which raged at the headquarters of the American army, distracted the attention, and deadened the alacrity, of the enemy. Gates, who formerly had been Arnold's staunchest patron and most warm admirer, had altered his sentiments ever since that officer came northwards possessed of Washington's confidence, and in the character of Schuyler's friend. Thenceforward he regarded his second in command with distrust which, after the nineteenth September, was intensified into bitter jealousy. It has been truly remarked that "but for Arnold, on that eventful day, Burgoyne would have marched into Albany at the autumnal equinox, a victor;"<sup>1</sup> and yet this inestimable service, which should by rights have constituted an overpowering claim upon the gratitude of General Gates, assumed in his jaundiced view the complexion of an unpardonable injury. In the report of the battle which he sent to Congress no mention whatever was made of Arnold, nor of Arnold's division; although it is hardly too much to say that every soldier, who took part in the combat, belonged to one or other of Arnold's regiments.<sup>2</sup> So flagrant

<sup>1</sup> Lossing's *Life of Schuyler*; Vol. II., Chapter 19.

<sup>2</sup> At the very last moment, in the gloom of evening, a few companies of Massachusetts infantry, from another general's command, were sent to Arnold's support; and they certainly did their best to make up for lost time.



an injustice provoked from the slighted general a written remonstrance which was acrimoniously, and even contemptuously, resented by his superior officer. Gates, only too well aware that Arnold's temper was a short one, deliberately entered upon a most artful system of annoyance and provocation. He disobliterated his eminent subordinate by a series of petty ill-services, plied him to his face with studied insults, and in his absence filled the air with sarcasms which were intended to reach his ears. Colonel Wilkinson, who knew how to please his chief, set afloat a story that Arnold had taken no personal share in the battle, and had remained safe in camp as long as bullets were flying;<sup>1</sup> but that tale was, for the present, circulated only in whispers and in private letters, for Arnold's aides-de-camp had the reputation of being fiery fellows.<sup>2</sup> The victim of this cowardly persecution, before very long, came to the end of his patience; and, at the close of a stormy interview, he asked Gates for permission to leave the army and retire to Philadelphia. When the news got abroad, the rank and file were excited and indignant; large numbers of regimental officers openly protested in terms which, according to strict military notions, were not without a savour of mutiny; and the generals signed a memorial entreating their distinguished comrade to remain with them for at least one more battle. Touched by such an expression of feeling, Arnold declared himself willing to postpone his resignation; but the command of his division was withdrawn from him, and he was no longer invited to attend at Councils of War. He could not, however,

<sup>1</sup> This impudent falsehood has been judged worthy of refutation by several excellent historians, who have shown "by an overwhelming weight of evidence" that Arnold was in the battle of the nineteenth September. One might as well demand evidence to prove that Nelson was in the sea-fight off Cape St. Vincent.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Henry Livingston, who had been on Schuyler's staff, and now was on Arnold's, fought a duel "about a matter growing out of the quarrel between Gates and Arnold." *Life of Benedict Arnold*; Chapter IX.

find the heart to tear himself away from the neighbourhood of the army; and Benedict Arnold still continued to haunt the camp as if he were an amateur civilian curious to see what a battle was like, and to experience, for once in his lifetime, the novel sensation of being under fire.

Gates got quit of Arnold with the less compunction because he had at his disposal a substitute whom he professed to regard as the better soldier of the two. When General Lincoln had done all that he was able to accomplish against Ticonderoga, he was summoned to Bemis's Heights, and appointed second in command of the Northern army. He remonstrated earnestly against his own promotion, and used his best endeavours to reconcile his angry colleagues; but Gates was inexorable; and, at such a crisis in the fortunes of his cause, Lincoln was too good a patriot to refuse a post of danger even for the most honourable and disinterested of motives. The Americans, — in numbers, in temper, and in aptitude for the sort of fighting which they had on hand, — now constituted a force with which any general might proudly and confidently serve. Lincoln himself had brought with him from the Lakes a reinforcement of two thousand men. The Governors of Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts had already sent forward as many battalions of militia as they could provide with officers; and the ranks of those battalions were still in course of being recruited by a process which vividly illustrates the national character, and the special circumstances, of this extraordinary war. From every State in New England during the last fortnight there had poured, or trickled, into camp a stream of armed citizens who might have hesitated to encounter the delays and disgusts of a protracted campaign, but who knew that a sharp and final battle was imminent, and had made up their minds to see that battle through. The older farmers, who would not be troubled to drill, and who never felt comfortable outside their working garments, went forth from

their homes on horseback singly, or in small parties. They presented an unmilitary, and sometimes a rather grotesque, appearance on the road;<sup>1</sup> but they looked business-like enough when loading and firing imperturbably from behind a judiciously selected tree in the foremost line of skirmishers. The periodical return of effectives in Gates's army was always larger than that of the week before, and always below the truth. His force was estimated at between thirteen and fourteen thousand men; and he still was engaged in extending and strengthening his fortifications as diligently as if the adversaries in front of him had been in the proportion of two to one, instead, at the very utmost, of one to three.

Burgoyne's followers dwindled almost as quickly as his foes increased. The condition of the Royal army was already very miserable. Three months spent among the brambles by day, and in damp bivouacs at night, had reduced the uniforms to tatters. There was no spare clothing; no wine or coffee; no sustenance except salt pork and flour even for the sick and wounded. The grass in the meadows by the riverside had very soon been eaten, and many horses died of sheer starvation. Our people were altogether debarred from availing themselves of the inviting and multifarious resources with which that teeming valley abounded. Too few for the adequate protection of their threatened earthworks, they could not detach covering-parties large enough to ensure the safety of their foragers. The Americans, on the other hand, who had very few

<sup>1</sup> At a later period in the war a British officer, who met one of these people on the march, was reminded of Don Quixote, than whom there have been many worse soldiers. The Yankee horseman was described as sitting bolt upright, in stirrups which the toe could but just reach, his long lank visage crowned by a grizzled wig and a large flap-hat; saddle-bags behind him, provision-bags in front, and his "blazing-iron" on his shoulder. He bestrode a gaunt steed with a long switch-tail and mane down to the knees, which shuffled along at the pace of eight or nine miles an hour. It was, (according to English ideas,) "an unaccountable wriggling gait, that, till you are accustomed to it, you are more fatigued in riding two miles than in a whole day's fox-chase."

routine duties to occupy their time and damp their spirits, regarded the war of outposts as an animating pastime. The woods were full of them; and a day seldom passed on which some act of audacity was not successfully attempted by Republican soldiers or partisans. Forty or fifty seamen from Burgoyne's flotilla were made prisoners while searching for food in the deserted plantations on the east shore of the Hudson River; several of our privates, who were digging up potatoes in a field only a quarter of a mile to rear of the British headquarters, were surprised and captured; and thirty others were surrounded and carried off by a troop of young farmers from the nearest township who were out on a frolic with their shot-guns. While an enemy was bustling around them from dawn to dusk, and sometimes all through the night, the Royal troops suffered painfully from want of sleep; and that infliction fell with special severity upon our officers, who during this trying campaign accepted a noble equality with the rank and file in discomfort and privation, and had very much more than their due share of wounds, and toil, and watching.<sup>1</sup>

In the first week of October the army was placed upon a two-thirds ration. Hope had by this time departed from every breast, and the void created by its loss was in many cases not supplied by a sense of duty. The Indians were the first to slip away northwards, and were soon followed by most of the Canadians and the local Tories. Desertions became alarmingly frequent among the English and German regiments. The edge of the forest, where the runaways found a sure haven, was everywhere close at hand; and the Royal camp was infested by Republican emissaries, in the guise of Loyalists, who promised the over-worked

<sup>1</sup> "I do not believe," Burgoyne wrote, "that either officer or soldier ever slept during this interval without his clothes, or that any General officer, or commander of a regiment, passed a single night without being on his legs, occasionally at different hours, and constantly an hour before daylight."

and under-fed soldiers that, when they once reached the American lines, they would find the best of good living, and a discipline incomparably less strict than in the most lax of European armies. Burgoyne called his three principal lieutenants together, exposed the situation frankly, and asked for suggestions and advice. General Riedesel pronounced himself in favour of an instant withdrawal towards Lake George and Ticonderoga; and his view was shared by General Fraser, while General Phillips declined to give any opinion whatsoever. Burgoyne thereupon intimated that, if he and his troops were alone concerned, he should commence his retreat at daybreak on the morrow; but he reminded the gallant men with whom he was conversing that greater interests than their own were at stake. The loss of their line of escape to Canada would be a partial and remediable misfortune for England; but, if the pressure were taken off General Gates, that officer would forthwith lead his fourteen thousand men to the assistance of General Washington. Sir William Howe, in all probability, would be defeated and destroyed; the war would come to a sudden and calamitous termination; and the colonies would be lost to the King. Burgoyne further remarked, — commenting quietly, and most justly, upon Lord George Germaine's unqualifiable conduct, — that his own army had evidently been intended from the very first to be *hazarded*, and that circumstances had now arrived which might require it to be *devoted*. He would therefore, (he said,) make one more attempt, by operating against the left flank of the enemy, to discover whether there still remained any possibility of forcing, sword in hand, a passage to Albany.

On the morning of the seventh October Burgoyne issued from his lines with all, and more than all, the force which he could prudently withdraw from the garrisons of his numerous redoubts. He advanced in a south-westerly direction to a point within a short distance of the American intrenchments; halted in a



large field of uncut wheat; and deployed his troops behind the fences, and amidst the standing corn. Lord Balcarres, with the Light Infantry, took post upon the right. Then came the Twenty-Fourth regiment, and several thin battalions of Germans; while on the extreme left stood our Grenadiers under Major Acland, who had been wounded at Hubbardtown, but was so cleverly and assiduously nursed by his wife that he contrived not to miss a single battle. Six British, and four Hessian, cannon were planted in groups all along the centre of the array, on convenient spots of rising ground. The various sections of the line were under the charge of Riedesel, Phillips, and Simon Fraser; every one of whom was fit to command an army corps, instead of a poor five hundred infantry apiece. This meaningless and objectless military expedition, which on Burgoyne's part was a counsel of despair, was dignified by the title of a "reconnaissance in force;" but that is a misnomer, for our people could learn nothing about the lie of the country or the situation of the enemy, and they did not even discern any signs of the tempest which was gathering a few hundred paces in their immediate front. At four in the afternoon a perfect deluge of assailants unexpectedly and simultaneously bore down upon them with equal violence in every quarter. Colonel Morgan with fifteen hundred men,—as many as all the Royal troops together,—attacked Balcarres in front and rear; and nearly the whole of two powerful brigades marched steadily and rapidly against Acland. As soon as the Americans came into view "a terrible discharge of musket-balls and grape made great havoc among the branches of the trees over their heads." But our gunners and our Grenadiers soon got the range; a conflict ensued, marked by splendid rivalry in valour; the fighting was at close quarters, and often hand to hand; and some of the field-pieces were taken, and re-taken, five times over. The mere vicinity of such a pandemonium was destructive to the composure of ordinary

soldiers. A Brunswick battalion, drawn up next in line to the right, retired in confusion before it had lost a man. General Riedesel, and his staff, rode in among the fugitives with bare swords, and rallied them behind the Hesse Hanau artillery; but Acland's flank was laid open, and the Americans had at least a whole regiment hotly engaged for every one of his four companies. The Grenadiers fell back; and their brave leader, through no fault of his comrades, remained desperately wounded in the power of the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

When the firing began in earnest Arnold was neither to hold nor to bind, and in a very few minutes he was spurring towards the front on the swiftest of all his short-lived animals. Behind him, at an ever increasing interval, rode one of Gates's aides-de-camp with orders to arrest his progress, and bring him straight back to Headquarters. This unfortunate officer followed the chase during the whole afternoon, and was led in the course of it through some very dangerous places; but he would have been in far greater hazard of his life if he had ever succeeded in laying his hand on the lapel of Benedict Arnold's coat. For Arnold, intoxicated by a violent reaction from the gloomy silence in which he had been eating his heart during the last fortnight, was not at this moment master of himself, although on that day he dominated and inspired, as never before, every one of his countrymen with whom he came in contact. In quest of the shortest cut towards the point at which he was aiming, he galloped midway between the opposing lines through a shower of crossing bullets; and, at the further end of that perilous avenue, he met a strong body of Massachusetts infantry, who greeted their former commander with loud huzzas. Giving them the word of command in a vigorous phrase, which most certainly

<sup>1</sup> Acland had been shot through both legs, and he was a large, heavy man. An English captain carried him as far as his own strength held out, and then proclaimed that he would give fifty guineas to any soldier who could bring the Major home alive. "A stout Grenadier instantly took him on his back, and was hastening into camp when they were overtaken, and made prisoners."

was not taken from the pages of an Army Manual, he brandished his blade in the air, and, with the headlong energy of a madman, and the infallible instinct of a true soldier, he launched his three regiments against the main battle which connected the two wings of Burgoyne's army. The Germans offered a creditable resistance; but they were out-matched in number, in enthusiasm, and, (above all,) in the precision of their fire. Four Hessian captains fell in quick succession; Arnold, after a first rebuff, came storming back again at the head of his New Englanders; Burgoyne's centre was broken; and, when the infantry left the field, it was impossible to withdraw the cannon. The teams of draught-horses, — an easy target for riflemen who could hit a deer running, — had been shot down; most of the artillerymen in Major Williams's battery of six-pounders had been killed or wounded; and he, and all his junior officers, were captured in a last attempt to rescue the guns without which they did not greatly care to return to camp.

Meanwhile the British troops on the right wing were contending manfully against threefold odds. Our Light Infantrymen, who by this time were proficient in the tactics of the backwoods, had sheltered themselves behind such cover as was attainable; while Simon Fraser, riding continuously and slowly up and down the line on his iron-grey charger, in the full uniform of a British general, was the life and soul of the unequal fight, and the observed of both armies. It was only too evident that he had attracted the particular attention of a skilled and persistent marksman. The crupper of his horse was grazed by a rifle-ball; almost immediately afterwards another passed through the mane, just behind the ears; and the third traversed Fraser's body. He was carried away mortally hurt, and the command devolved upon Lord Balcarres.<sup>1</sup> That officer was already hard pressed,

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Anburey described how General Fraser was brought out of the fight, supported in the saddle by a friend on either side of his horse. He was met by officers eagerly inquiring as to his wound; but

and in a few more minutes would have been entirely surrounded. He commenced a retreat, which was saved from being a calamitous rout by the heroism of his soldiers. Their perfect discipline, and their readiness to face about and fight, kept the enemy in respect, and screened from too close a pursuit the much less orderly rearward movement of Burgoyne's left and centre. Success was impossible from the first; but the affair had been fought out with unusual thoroughness. Five and twenty British officers had been killed or wounded; a hundred soldiers of the royal army were buried in and about the wheat-field; and Burgoyne lost every one of the ten guns he had brought with him into action. According to an eye-witness, who took the time by his watch, the engagement had lasted exactly fifty-two minutes.

There, if it had rested with General Gates, the matter would have ended. He never left his Headquarters; he looked into nothing with his own eyes; and all that still remained of the afternoon must have been consumed in sending him information about the altered position of affairs, and in waiting for any fresh orders which he might be pleased to issue. But Benedict Arnold had a very definite notion of his own about the use to which the next two hours should be put. Without more ado he assumed the command of all the troops who were near enough to hear his voice and obey his vehement gestures, and marched them in the direction of the British fortifications. Burgoyne's right was covered by a field-work of horseshoe form, where Colonel Breymann had been stationed with an insufficient force of Brunswick infantry; while the open space in front of Freeman's Farm was searched by the fire of a redoubt, with walls from twelve to sixteen feet in height, flanked by strong

his only answer was a melancholy shake of the head. His sufferings were horrible. "Did he whose soul was so full of noble and sublime impulses die here, shot through like some ravening beast?" That reflection passed through the mind of William Dean Howells when standing on the spot where Wolfe fell; and the same thought is irresistibly suggested by the story of Fraser's death-bed.

intrenchments behind which some heavy guns were mounted. This was the point against which Arnold's first attack was levelled; but Balcarres, who superintended the defence, took care that his artillerymen should load with grape; the privates of the Light companies had re-filled their cartridge-boxes; and the Americans were handsomely repulsed. Baffled, but not daunted or depressed, Arnold made a second throw for victory in another quarter; and, with the daylight fading around him, he hurriedly arranged for a combined assault on the face, and rear, of the German position. His impetuous onset carried everything before it. Breymann was killed; and those of his troops who could not make their escape laid down their arms, and surrendered themselves prisoners by dozens and by scores. Arnold was pushing in through the sally-port just as their last volley was fired. His horse rolled over, stone-dead; and his thigh-bone was shivered by a bullet which a wounded German discharged from a few paces off. Arnold, who admired the man's courage, and probably would have done the same in his place, insisted that the fine fellow, (as he called him,) should not be bayoneted. It was the leg that had been injured at Quebec, and the surgeon talked of amputation; but the General would not hear of it. If that, (said Arnold,) was all the doctors could do for him, they had better lift him on another horse, and let him see the battle out. He was perhaps the only man in either army who did not think it already high time that the battle was over.<sup>1</sup>

Night set in; the clangour of arms ceased; and Englishmen and Americans, in close proximity, flung themselves exhausted on the ground which they had kept or won. No fires were lit; no sentinels challenged; and no human sound was heard except the lamentations of

<sup>1</sup> These were the circumstances under which the Staff Officer, who had so long been following Arnold about the field, finally overtook him, and unburdened himself of his belated message. It was to the effect that General Gates desired General Arnold to do nothing rash.



the wounded, which in their sad concert were not distinctive of nationality. The time and place were such that the only safety lay in sitting still. A Brunswick colonel, stung by certain reflections on German valour with which the intelligence of Arnold's final success was received at the British Headquarters, collected a small party of his countrymen, and sallied forth upon a desperate attempt to reconquer the abandoned position; but he was encountered in the woods by a sham Loyalist, who conducted him to the hostile lines, where he was captured with all his officers. Burgoyne knew no sleep that night, and little enough for many nights to come. He was far too old and clever a soldier not to recognise that the great game had gone against him. He had not sought death, and still less had he shunned it; but he went wherever he was wanted on that busy afternoon without caring whether he were killed or not. His hat and clothes were pierced with musket-balls; and his favourite aide-de-camp had been struck down by his side, and at that very moment was dying on General Gates's own bed.<sup>1</sup> But Burgoyne himself had come alive out of the rain of bullets, and it still was incumbent on him to take what measures he could devise in order to make the best of an almost hopeless situation.

The Americans were now inside his lines, sheltered by earth-works which he had himself erected, and with many of his own cannon ready to be pointed at his own troops. All his British and German regiments had, twice or thrice during the course of the expedition, been tested in battle up to the very limit of their endurance, and had lost most of their best and bravest, and in some cases more than half their entire numbers. His local allies, whether red or white, had very generally deserted him; and those of them who stayed were

<sup>1</sup> "As to my life," (he wrote to Sir William Howe,) "I am free from wounds; though my person, you may imagine, has not been spared." Burgoyne was able to recommend sergeants for promotion to ensigncies from his own personal observation of their conduct under fire. Letters of Oct. 20, and Nov. 26, 1777, in the *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*.

of no account as warriors. If the army was to be preserved from a crushing misfortune Burgoyne could not afford to waste an hour of daylight, nor of torch-light either. His left wing, which on the seventh October had not been actively engaged, continued under arms through the night; his tents were struck as quietly as possible; and, when nothing more remained to be done, Lord Balcarres aroused his weary soldiers, and marched them out of the intrenchments which they had so steadfastly defended. Burgoyne planted his force half a mile to the rearward, on some hills which overlooked the river and the river-road. The position, crowned by a large redoubt, and enclosed by impenetrable ravines, was as strong as a fortress; but it covered an extent of only fifteen hundred paces square, and was commanded from end to end by the adversary's artillery. Here Simon Fraser died after some hours of agony, endured with rare composure; and he was carried to a spot where he himself had desired that he should be buried. All his brother Generals stood around the grave, and a clergyman read the Service, slowly and very impressively, from the first sentence to the last, while the heavy shot threw up the loose earth in showers over and around him. On the opposite heights there were few or no telescopes; and it was some while before the true purpose of the assembly was perceived by the enemy. But the hostile missiles suddenly ceased; "and the solemn voice of a single cannon, at measured intervals, boomed along the valley, and awakened the responses of the hills. It was a minute gun fired by the Americans in honour of the gallant dead."<sup>1</sup>

The Republican forces had taken up their ground within a few furlongs of the British, both on front and flank; there was brisk skirmishing throughout the day; and towards evening Burgoyne was informed, (as indeed he must have foreseen without being told,) that General Gates had commenced to bring round his left wing so as to pen our army between the Hudson River and a con-

<sup>1</sup> Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*; Volume I., Chapter 2.

tinuous semicircle of hostile brigades and batteries.<sup>1</sup> Burgoyne was now entangled in one of those distracting, but not altogether insuperable, mazes of difficulty which put a commanding officer's force of will to the most severe and crucial proof. Washington had been in as bad a case after the defeat on Long Island in August 1776, with half his army on the wrong side of the channel which separated Brooklyn from the city of New York. Soult was in a worse plight still when, in May 1809, his famous adversary had forced the passage of the Douro. But the French Marshal had the strength of mind to change his point of view in a single moment; to abandon his well-considered plans for a military victory, and his wild schemes of political ambition; to sacrifice his artillery, and his vast stores of plunder; and to struggle through the mountains by night and day until he had placed his infantry beyond the risk of capture. Gates, though somewhat less sluggish in pursuit than in battle, was not a Sir Arthur Wellesley; and, if Burgoyne had sunk his cannon in the Hudson, had left behind him everything which travelled upon wheels, had stowed his last week's provisions in the knapsacks of his soldiers, and had made a series of forced marches broken only by the very shortest pauses which repose and refreshment imperatively demanded, he might have reached Lake George within fifty or sixty hours, bringing all his men and muskets with him. That was General Riedesel's view; and he was a German veteran who had served on the weaker side in the Seven Years' War, and was familiar with the methods by which Frederic the Great, and Prince Henry of Prussia, had over and over again, to the astonishment and chagrin of their opponents, extricated themselves and their little armies out of the very tightest of tight places.

<sup>1</sup> In the course of the operations of the eighth October, General Lincoln received a wound of the same character, and gravity, as that which on the previous evening prostrated Arnold. Burgoyne's position on the day after the battle may be clearly traced in the map at the end of this chapter.

To adopt a bold resolution in a supreme emergency is comparatively easy for a monarch at the head of his own troops, or for a famous captain of eminent and established position, and exceptionally masterful character. Frederic and his brother were royal personages; Marshal Soult, unless he is much belied, had aspired to a throne; and George Washington was a king by nature; whereas John Burgoyne was nothing more than a soldier on his promotion, at the beck and call, — and, if he met with a disaster, at the far from tender mercy, — of his official superiors. He was new to high responsibilities; he had never before held an independent command; and he was only too well aware that the Minister of State at home, who had sent him forth so recklessly, and supported him so ineffectively, would be the first to throw him over if his retirement to Canada presented the appearance of a flight. Soon after sunset on the eighth October he commenced a retreat in strict conformity with the most approved maxims of the tactical art. General Riedesel led the way with four or five regiments, and a battery or two of field pieces; then came the heavy guns, and a long train of baggage-carts; while Burgoyne himself followed with the main column of infantry. The commissariat stores were transported by a string of barges which ascended the Hudson River alongside the army, taking care to keep as many yards of the current as possible between themselves and that eastern shore which, when day appeared, would be alive with American riflemen. Everything was packed up and taken away; and nobody remained in camp except a few hundred dying or disabled men, whom Burgoyne expressly commended by letter to the generosity of his American adversary. An hour before midnight the rear guard set forth under General Phillips and Lord Balcarres, leaving their watch-fires burning to deceive the enemy. But those fires did not remain alight long, for the rain came down in floods, and, (according to the recollection of those exposed to it,) continued almost without intermission during the

whole of the ensuing week. The march was slow, and toilsome in the extreme; for the bridges over the smallest runlets, through which a man on foot could have waded, had to be repaired in order to let the carriages pass, and then were broken down once more with a view of impeding the hostile pursuit. At three next morning Burgoyne halted, and remained stationary until he had lost the whole of the start which he gained under cover of the darkness. His leisurely progress was not resumed until late in the afternoon, by which time so much water had fallen that the road was ruined. It was ten at night before the British, leaving behind them most of their waggons embedded in the mud, took up their quarters in and about the Schuyler buildings on the south bank of the Fishkill Creek. They had consumed twenty-four hours over a journey of exactly eight miles.

Next morning Burgoyne crossed the Fishkill; but a more formidable obstacle lay between him and safety. To place his army without delay on the eastern shore of the Hudson River was an imperative duty to which he should have postponed all other considerations whatsoever. Early on that tenth October he sent off Colonel Sutherland, at the head of a sufficient force, with directions to occupy and repair the bridge of boats which the Royal Engineers had built four weeks back, and which still was standing. Sutherland passed his infantry over the river with no great difficulty, and advanced until he was almost within sight of Fort Edward; but there he was overtaken by a message of recall so positively worded that he had no choice except to retrace his steps. He left behind him, on his way back to camp, a company of provincial Loyalists for the protection of the work which was in progress at the bridge; but they fled as soon as a few shots were fired at them by a small party of Republicans. They were followed home, stolidly and reluctantly, by the British artificers, who reported that their task was already more than half done, and could most certainly have been finished before daybreak on the morrow.



The counter-order which had been despatched to Colonel Sutherland was deplorable, but not quite inexplicable; for at that moment Burgoyne wanted to have the whole of his small army gathered together on one spot, and ready to his own hand. His heart was not in the retreat to Canada, and he even now hankered after another opportunity of trying conclusions with the adversary. General Gates's vanguard at length began to show itself in the southern quarter; and Burgoyne, ardently desiring to be attacked, made preparations for a defensive battle which, if successfully conducted on his part, would go far to redeem the campaign. He posted his batteries, and drew up his regiments in line of battle, along the low hills overlooking Fishkill Creek. A broad space in front of his guns was cleared of everything that could afford cover to the American sharpshooters; and the Schuyler mansion on the other side of the stream, behind which Gates might have assembled and formed his columns of attack, was burned to the ground by Burgoyne's orders.<sup>1</sup> Our privates were overheard blessing Providence for the timely rain which would damp the priming of the fire-arms, and give an honest British grenadier a chance of getting at the rebels with his bayonet. Burgoyne was always enthusiastically followed, and efficiently served. He had acquired the respect of his soldiers by treating them respectfully, and had secured the esteem of his officers by the scrupulous regard for justice which he exhibited in all his professional relations, and by his unaffected and easy friendliness when off duty. From the first hour of the expedition, up to the very latest, his commands were eagerly and punctually obeyed; and seldom has a general, and never perhaps a luckless general, been

<sup>1</sup> During the previous night a range of barracks and storehouses, forming part of General Schuyler's establishment, had perished in a fire which was beyond question accidental. The buildings were full of British soldiers, many of them sick and wounded, who were rescued from the flames with the utmost difficulty. Sergeant Lamb, the historian, for one, barely escaped alive.

more heartily beloved by his comrades and subordinates.

Fortune, during a short five minutes, seemed to repent of the cruelty with which she had hitherto pursued the gallant Englishman. On the morning of the eleventh October, General Gates made a forward movement in the direction of Burgoyne's position. A thick mist shrouded the tiny valley which lay between the two armies; and twelve or fifteen hundred of the best New England regulars had advanced beyond the stream, and were already mounting the opposite slope, when the fog suddenly lifted, and they found themselves separated by only two hundred yards of open pasture from the muzzles of Burgoyne's cannon, and the serried ranks of his musketeers. The grapeshot commenced to fly, and the British infantry made ready for a charge; but the Americans, officers and men alike, took in the situation at a glance, and re-passed the glen with small loss, and in most admired disorder. A business-like people, they had a firm hold upon the great military truth that the first object of a retreat is to get safe away; and in that respect the incident might have served as a lesson to poor Burgoyne. Nothing disconcerted by the repulse of their centre, the Republicans pressed forward, on left and right, in overpowering numbers and with definite purpose. The various manœuvres upon which their hopes of a wholesale and conclusive victory depended were executed skilfully and promptly, and with as great an exertion of valour as on each occasion was necessary for the attainment of the end in view. General Fellows, with at least three thousand men, posted himself solidly beyond the Hudson River; lined the shore with cannon; constructed an intrenchment which effectually blocked the egress from Burgoyne's bridge; and beset the fords and ferries along the great river as far north as Fort Edward. General Gates arranged his guns, and drew up his main army, on the southern bank of Fishkill Creek; while Colonel Morgan forded that rivulet a mile or two higher up, wheeled to the eastward, and

stationed the whole of his command, with well-judged audacity, just in front of the forest which bordered the flank of Burgoyne's camp.

That camp was a mile and a half long, and in very few places more than half a mile across. Hardly a single spot within it lay beyond point-blank range of an American cannon. The round-shot hurtled through the air from morning till evening, and the surest marksmen in Colonel Morgan's own regiment spent the whole of the daylight mounted aloft in trees which commanded the interior of the principal British redoubt. The only trustworthy cover inside the fortification was afforded by the angle which directly faced the adversary; and there the whole garrison clustered, "harassed and fatigued with continually sitting and lying on the ground, all huddled in a small compass."<sup>1</sup> The horses were herded, out of the reach of cannon-balls, in rugged and barren ravines where they had no provender but dry leaves; "and, so sure as a poor horse was allured by the temptation of some refreshing grass, which grew in the meadows in great abundance, it met with instant death by a rifle-shot." Many of the provision-boats had been captured, and others were sunk by General Fellows's artillery; so that it became necessary to land their cargoes, and transport the barrels and sacks into the redoubts on the shoulders of the men, with vast labour, and some loss of life from the enemy's musketry. The soldiers, debarred from cutting wood and lighting fires, lived upon raw food which would not have been very dainty or nutritive even if they had possessed the means of cooking it.

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Anburey's letter of the 17th November, 1777, gives an account of what passed inside the British camp during that last week of the campaign. "The soldiers," he wrote, "would hoist a cap upon a stick over the works; when instantly there would be one or two shots fired at it, and as many holes through it. I have seen a cap that has been perforated by three balls." Our men were forbidden to reply, for fear of throwing away their ammunition at a moment when the enemy might be meditating an assault in force. Anburey's narrative is confirmed by the frank and unvarnished evidence given by Lord Balcarres in May 1779.

Luxuries there were none ; and comforts were scarce, and exorbitantly dear. New England rum was sold, to those who could pay for it, at a guinea the half-pint ; and the generals sate on mattresses spread out in a circle upon the soaked and inhospitable soil. Shelterless, and in sodden rags, our people starved and suffered ; while the pitiless rain descended upon them in streams, as it had continued to descend ever since the retreat began.

The whole encampment was so closely surrounded, and so completely exposed, that there was no sanctuary available even for the weakest and the most unwarlike. Four officers had brought their wives with them on the expedition. Two of the husbands, shot down in battle, were lying between life and death ; and a third had been killed outright. It was no place for women. During the past three weeks, while the army lay in front of Bemis's Heights, these ladies had endured much discomfort and distress in a house where the entrance-hall and parlours were strewn with poor fellows enfeebled by dysentery ; while in the bed-rooms officers were dying, or praying that they might die, of frightful wounds. The dwelling, which had now been allotted to them as a refuge on the beleaguered peninsula above Saratoga, was a still more crowded hospital, and a shambles too ; for a well-directed cannonade carried death and mutilation through all the upper chambers where the surgeons were at work. A great number of women and children, with invalided and maimed soldiers, — and a few, but only a few, uninjured poltroons, — sate packed in fetid squalor behind the cellar-doors. They could plainly hear the cannon-balls rolling along the floor above their heads. It was believed that the gunners across the Hudson had mistaken this building for General Burgoyne's headquarters ;<sup>1</sup> and a proof was soon given that Americans, where women are concerned, never consciously transgress the laws of chivalry. The sole supply of water for the Royal army was one muddy spring, and what more could be got out of the holes which the cattle

<sup>1</sup> Madame Riedesel's *Journal*.

had trodden with their feet; so that our privates were reduced to catch the rain in their hats, in order to make their flour into a paste which it was just possible to swallow.<sup>1</sup> Thirst, very trying to everyone, was torture for the wounded, and for the little children, in the pestilent atmosphere of their subterranean abode. No man could approach the river-side by day, and live; but a soldier's wife volunteered her services, and went to and fro with her buckets between the house and the watering-place, while the rifles and muskets on the opposite shore were all respectfully silent.

Discipline, among the British rank and file, was maintained unimpaired; but their spirit gradually became quenched, and their keenness blunted. "The utmost," (wrote Burgoyne,) "that the officers gave me to hope from the complexion of their men was that they would fight if attacked. The Germans fell short of that. It was notorious that they meant to have given one fire, and then have clubbed their arms."<sup>2</sup> The besieged troops could neither force their way out, nor slip through to Canada in small parties. Some of the Indian warriors made a run for freedom; but, with all their secrecy and agility, and their consummate knowledge of the woods, they failed to penetrate the American lines, and returned disconsolate to camp. Not a word arrived from Sir William Howe; not a word from Sir Henry Clinton: and the Quartermaster-General reported that only three days' provisions, upon short allowance, remained in store. On the afternoon of the thirteenth October Burgoyne assembled a Council, which included all field-officers, and the captains in command of regiments. He had reason to believe, (he said,) that some, perhaps all, who were informed as to the real state of affairs were of a mind to capitulate; but he should hold himself inexcusable if he were to

<sup>1</sup> These circumstances are taken from Lieutenant Anburey's forty-second letter. For a long while past, (he says,) the British troops "had not a morsel of bread, but mixed up their flour into cakes, and baked them upon a stone before the fire."

<sup>2</sup> Burgoyne to Sir William Howe; October 20, 1777. *American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*: Volume I.



take a step "of so great consequence to national and personal honour without such a concurrence of sentiments as should make a treaty an act of the whole army as well as of the General." At the same time he assured them, in manly phrases, that he, and he alone, was responsible for the predicament in which the army was now placed; inasmuch as he had never asked anyone for advice, but had always required, and obtained, obedience to his orders. The Council was unanimously of opinion that it would be good policy "to save to the King his troops by a thoroughly honourable capitulation;" and negotiations were opened, on the ensuing morning, between the English and the American commanders. Gates would accept nothing short of unconditional surrender; and certain arbitrary and unusual demands, upon which he strongly insisted, were regarded as altogether intolerable to the self-respect of military men. The British General, speaking for himself and all his officers, replied that, rather than submit to any such terms, they would rush sword in hand on the enemy, and would take no quarter. In the course of his life John Burgoyne had often employed exaggerated and over-coloured language; but on this occasion he meant exactly what he said, and he said it to much purpose. Gates gave himself another night to think the subject over, and then agreed that the Royal troops should march out of their camp with all the honours of war, and that the whole army should be granted a free passage to Great Britain from the port of Boston, upon condition of not serving again in North America during the then existing contest. That, as history will always take very good care to remember, was the governing clause in the Convention of Saratoga.

During the whole time that messages were passing from camp to camp, either an informal, or a declared, cessation of hostilities established itself between the two armies. The bombardment subsided; the more deadly whistle of bullets was no longer heard; the strain on the besieged garrison came to a sudden end; and the

Americans, for their part, stacked their muskets, and extinguished their linstocks, with a sentiment of genuine satisfaction and relief. Our privates thronged the bank of Fishkill Creek to get their fill of the cool running water; and they were soon on amicable terms with adversaries who spoke their own language, who were very generous with the contents of their provision-wallets, and against whom, as man to man, they had no rational ground of quarrel. On the sixteenth of October, after many qualms, and some renewed consultation with his military advisers, Burgoyne signed the treaty. A great quantity of fresh meat at once arrived from across the stream for distribution among his famished battalions; and the remaining hours of daylight were consumed in preparing for the ceremony of the morrow. Before the negotiations were finally concluded, the last penny due to every Royal soldier had been paid out to him from the military chest.<sup>1</sup> The Germans burned the poles of their regimental flags; and the colours themselves were sewn into the lining of a mattress against the day when they could be brought forth from their hiding-place, and unfurled once more in the Duke of Brunswick's presence. The English, whose standards had not been hired out for gold, and who had carried them erect and safe through three fiercely contested battles, did not conceive that any such precaution was demanded by their own, or their Sovereign's, honour.

The conduct of our people, during these trying scenes, was manly and dignified, and exempt from any admixture of bravado. They marched from their camps to a meadow near the junction of the two rivers, and there deposited their arms, and emptied out their cartridges. Some of the men cried bitterly when parting with their weapon; but none except friends were there to see. Gates, with a delicacy which the British

<sup>1</sup> It is pleasant to know that the poor woman, who went to the Hudson for water, got her share of the money that was going. "Everyone," said Madame Riedesel, "threw a whole handful into her lap, and she received altogether over twenty guineas."

generals warmly acknowledged, confined all the separate portions of his army in their respective quarters, under the strictest countersign; and only one single member of his Staff was in attendance for the purpose of taking over the surrendered property in the name, and for the use, of the American people. It was a rich prize, consisting almost exclusively of articles which the captors specially needed. There were five thousand muskets, seventy thousand rounds of ball-cartridge, many ammunition-waggons, four hundred sets of harness, and a fine train of brass artillery, — battering guns, field guns, howitzers, and mortars; — forty-two pieces of ordnance in all. The prisoners numbered five thousand eight hundred, of whom half were Germans.<sup>1</sup> The rest were almost entirely British regulars; for only a very small minority of the Provincial levies had stood it out loyally and faithfully to the last. Major Skene, a gallant enthusiast for whom the shipwreck of the cause which he served meant personal ruin, wrote himself down in the list of prisoners as “a poor follower of the British army.” That army contained several veterans of high and deserved renown; and in all the regiments, and not only on the Staff, there were many youths of good birth, and bright military promise. The Americans claimed to have taken six members of Parliament, at a time when Parliament was almost identical with fashionable society. Burgoyne’s officers were the flower of our fighting aristocracy; and they, with their handful of soldiers, — abandoned by incompetent Ministers to an all but inevitable catastrophe, — nevertheless sustained the national reputation for valour and discipline at the point to which it had been raised by the column of Fontenoy.

Gates entertained the chief officers of the Royal army at a banquet of antique simplicity.<sup>2</sup> Burgoyne, on

<sup>1</sup> Reckoning in the wounded, the Americans, previously to the capitulation, had already captured above eighteen hundred prisoners.

<sup>2</sup> The table consisted of bare planks, laid across empty barrels; and the Republican camp could produce only four plates, and two drinking-glasses for the use of Gates and Burgoyne. There was plenty of plain roast and boiled, but no liquor except rum and water.

being asked for a toast, gave "General Washington;" and his host responded by drinking to the King. When dinner was over, the British began their journey southward, passing between two parallel ranks of American infantry, nearly fourteen thousand by count, with four thousand more in the background. The Republicans were said to have spent the whole morning "scrubbing and cleaning their persons and firelocks, in order to make the best appearance possible."<sup>1</sup> Some of the more reflective among our Englishmen and Germans were deeply impressed by the unwonted spectacle, and drew ominous conclusions with regard to the ultimate issue of the war. "The men," said an officer of the Brunswick contingent, "stood so still that we were filled with astonishment. Not a man made a motion to speak with his neighbour. Moreover, kindly Nature had made them so slender, so handsome, and so sinewy that we wondered at the sight of so well-made a people." They owed little to the splendour of their outfit. The regulars of the Continental line were appropriately dressed, and carried stout knapsacks, and good French muskets; but the militia were in costumes which, whatever else might be said of them, certainly could not be called uniforms. The coats, indeed, of the officers were designed with a military intention, but they were cut according to the wearer's own fancy, and from the first material that came to hand; while on the flank of every battalion, with their unwieldy gun-barrels towering over their heads like a row of pikes, stood several score of respectable rural freeholders clothed as if for the hay-field, or, (at the very smartest,) for the church and the cattle-fair.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Letter from an officer in the London newspapers of January, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> The Germans noticed the size, and strange colours, of the wigs worn by the older among these armed citizens, and particularly by such of them as were Committee-men in their respective townships. "Some of them, (we are told,) looked as if they had a whole fleece on their shoulders. In Mr. Edward J. Lowell's *Hessians* there are frequent extracts from a German periodical which supported the views of the British Government, and was published at Göttingen, within George the Third's Electoral dominions.

Brunswick officer observed "many men fifty or sixty years old, who very evidently had now been brought for the first time into the ranks, but who had their hearts in the business, and were not to be made light of, especially in the woods. In serious earnest," (so this gentleman went on to say,) "it is a nation with much natural talent for war." The farmers of Massachusetts and Connecticut might have a talent for war; but they had no love of it. As soon as the fighting was done they returned to their families, conscious of having played the man, and thanking the Divine Providence which had given them the victory. They had more cause to be grateful than they yet knew; for from that day forward no hostile force, which could be dignified by the name of an invading army, ever again threatened the New England homes.

When the procession arrived opposite the American headquarters the two Commanders issued from a tent, and placed themselves in full view of both armies. Then Burgoyne delivered over his sword to Gates, who received it with a courteous inclination of the head, and instantly returned it to the owner. The sword is still preserved by the family. It is a soldier's weapon, with a blade forged for use and not for show, and a very solid handle of ivory which fits and fills the grasp. It was for many years in the possession of Field Marshal Sir John Fox Burgoyne, of Badajos, Ciudad Rodrigo, and San Sebastian,—a good soldier who was more fortunate than his ill-starred father in that his most important services were performed under the direction of a greater soldier than himself.

The American general, throughout these transactions, behaved like a man of feeling and honour. He had done everything in his power to mitigate the lot of those sufferers whom the British, on their retreat from the position in front of Bemis's Heights, had left behind them in hospital;<sup>1</sup> and when Lady Harriet Acland,

<sup>1</sup> It was reported to Gates that these defenceless people were in the greatest alarm of the scalp-hunters. He at once sent off a few light



after some very hazardous adventures, penetrated the Republican outposts in search of her wounded husband, she was received by Gates with the sympathy and respect due to her sex and her unhappy fortune. There was another American officer whose behaviour on this occasion was marked by true magnanimity. Philip Schuyler, with no signs of his military rank about him, was present at the capitulation; and Burgoyne seized the opportunity to express regret that the exigencies of war had necessitated the burning of his fine country-house, and the wrecking of his valuable property. Schuyler in return begged him to put the matter, then and always, out of his thoughts, and promised to send an aide-de-camp with him to Albany who would perhaps procure him better quarters than a stranger might be able to find for himself. "This gentleman," said Burgoyne, "conducted me to a very elegant house and, to my great surprise, introduced me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family; and in this house I remained during my whole stay in Albany, with a table of twenty covers for me and my friends, and every demonstration of hospitality." That hospitality was extended to others besides Burgoyne. When Madame Riedesel, shy and anxious, found herself in the midst of the American camp, she was encountered by "a noble-looking man" in civilian dress, who lifted her children from the waggon, led the family into a tent where a wholesome meal awaited them, and told them that his house would be their home as long as they remained at Albany. The poor lady had one very bad moment during her sojourn beneath General Schuyler's roof; for

horsemen at a gallop in order to reassure them; and he directed that the guard at the hospital should be mounted by Morgan's riflemen from the frontier, whom the Indians feared worse than the devil.

A London newspaper related that the American soldiers, who had plenty of food, and no means of cooking it, wished to confiscate the British camp-kettles; "but General Gates decided the matter by ordering the kettles to remain with the English, as they would be very necessary for them at Boston." Three days after the surrender Burgoyne informed Sir William Howe that the treatment of the officers and troops in general had been "of an extraordinary nature in point of generosity."

the eldest of her little girls, fascinated by the grandeur and the tastefulness of everything which she saw around her, cried, in the hearing of all the company: "Mother! Mother! Is this the palace Father was to have when he came to America?"

The districts through which the Royal army performed its long and dreary tramp to the sea-coast were inhabited by a very decent and worthy, and not unkindly people. They were exceedingly poor, with the temporary poverty of men who had stripped themselves, first of superfluities, and afterwards of comforts, for the furtherance of a public cause. Nothing surprised the English prisoners so much as the cheerful unanimity with which all classes, in town and country alike, submitted to every sort of sacrifice in order "to obtain that idol Independency."<sup>1</sup> The gentry, indeed, who conversed quite freely with Burgoyne's officers, confessed that before the outbreak of hostilities they had not harboured the most distant thought of separation from the mother-country; but they now concurred with the mass of their fellow-citizens in a settled and violent hatred of the British Parliament and the British Crown. They did not, however, show any inclination to visit the sins of George the Third upon his hapless and helpless servants. Whatever disagreeable experiences might be in store for the captive army in the Middle and Southern States of the Confederacy, the inhabitants of New England, along the whole of two hundred miles of road, were very seldom deficient in humanity, or, (after their own fashion,) in courtesy. But, all the same, in respect to their leading characteristics they were New Englanders still. The Deacons and the Selectmen were terribly scandalised whenever the British troops pursued their journey during service time on a Sunday; and, at any hour of every week-day, there were plenty of small local capitalists ready to buy

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Anburey relates, in his forty-sixth Letter, that the owners of some very humble cottages had parted with one out of their two blankets for the use of their army in the field.

guineas from a hungry Ensign, or a thirsty Grenadier, for the least number of paper dollars which, in his ignorance as to the current rate of exchange, he could be induced to accept. Our younger officers upbraided themselves with improvidence when they recalled to mind the vast quantities of Continental notes which they found among the spoils captured at Ticonderoga, and which, in the lightness of their hearts, they had burned, or otherwise disposed of, with every circumstance of contumely.<sup>1</sup>

Burgoyne and his companions soon learned, if they did not know it already, that a prevailing national quality among Americans of that generation was their immense and insatiable curiosity. All through the States no traveller was ever left in peace until he had satisfied his entertainers about his extraction and antecedents, his trade or profession, and the business which had brought him into their neighbourhood; and such unusual and remarkable travellers as now were passing through their confines New Hampshire and Massachusetts had never seen before. The country people dropped in from many miles round to line the causeways while the Royal infantry filed past. The girls were much in evidence, dressed in perfectly fitting clothes of bright colours, and looking exceedingly pretty in the eyes of poor lads who had been roughing it during three hard campaigns. "They stood," said an officer, "by dozens along our road, passing us in review, laughing mockingly at us, and from time to time dropping us a mischievous curtsey or handing us an apple." Such crowds of visitors pressed into the houses where the prisoners were quartered that their landlords were in some cases suspected of having taken money for the show. An unfortunate Lieutenant who had succeeded to a Scotch peerage, when he reached his destination

<sup>1</sup> At Stillwater, the first stage of their route, the British could only get nine dollars for each piece of gold. After crossing the Green Mountains they had learned to insist on at least eighteen or twenty dollars; and the storekeepers in the villages even then made a handsome profit by the transaction.

of an evening wet to the skin and splashed with mire, was expected to hold a levée for the purpose of enabling all the village gossips to see what a Lord was like.<sup>1</sup> Burgoyne himself had to face an ordeal which, to a man of his temperament, was more formidable than the musket-balls at Freeman's Farm. On the day when he was invited by General Heath to a ceremonial dinner in Boston the window and roofs were crowded with gazers, and the street was so densely packed that the Royal officers with difficulty forced their way along. Burgoyne could not help hearing one or two pungent remarks, which evidently had been saved up for that occasion, and which he took like a man of wit and breeding;<sup>2</sup> but there was no vulgar or overt disrespect either of voice or gesture. "Sir," (he afterwards observed to General Heath,) "I have been astonished at the civility of your people."

The first sight of the German auxiliaries aroused an intense interest in all the townships which lay between the Hudson and the Mystic rivers. New England children had hitherto fancied them to be as strong and ferocious as ogres;<sup>3</sup> and New England men could not forget that every Chasseur and Fusilier had confidently

<sup>1</sup> At one of these gatherings a jocular English subaltern rose from his seat, and, pointing to the youth, who on that afternoon was in a worse pickle than usual, informed the company, "in a voice and manner as if he was Herald at Arms," that this was the Right Honourable Francis Napier, of His Majesty's Thirty First Regiment of Foot, Baron of Merchiston in the Kingdom of Scotland, Baronet of Nova Scotia,—and a good deal else which was less authentic. The women present looked very attentively at his Lordship, and one of them threw up her hands and exclaimed: "Well! if that be a Lord, I never desire to see any other Lord than the Lord Jehovah."

<sup>2</sup> Trevelyan's *American Revolution*; volume I., pages 299 and 332.

<sup>3</sup> The generation which was still in the nursery during the first years of the Revolutionary war had strange traditions about the bulk and height, the physical conformation, and the prodigious appetite, of George the Third's foreign mercenaries. Among relics which in after days were ploughed up in the battle-fields near Bemis's Heights were some human teeth of abnormal shape. They were supposed to have belonged to Hessians; for it was popularly believed that many of them had double teeth all round both jaws.

looked forward to supplanting some rich American Whig in the enjoyment of his farmstead and his orchard. To judge from the talk of Hessians and Anspachers on board ship, and in their Canadian barracks, the suppression of the rebellion was to be followed by a transference of real estate on a scale surpassing anything which had taken place since the Israelites settled themselves down on the soil of Canaan. And now at last these dreaded strangers had entered their Promised Land, but not to possess it. Their miserable aspect excited the contempt, and awakened the compassion, of the people whom they had so deeply and wantonly injured. A curious account of them was given by a lady who witnessed their arrival at Cambridge;—in which town, contiguous to the Port of Boston, our army, by a Resolution of the Massachusetts Congress, was for the present appointed to be lodged. “I never,” she wrote, “had the least idea that the creation produced such a sordid set of creatures in human figure;—poor, dirty, emaciated men; and great numbers of women, who seemed to be beasts of burden, having bushel baskets on their backs, by which they were bent double. The contents seemed to be pots and kettles, various sorts of furniture, and children peeping through gridirons and other utensils.” They brought with them some very young infants who had been born on the road; and the women were barefooted, and clothed in dirty rags. Madame Riedesel accompanied the line of march in a roomy, but not very sightly, vehicle. “My calash,” she said, “resembled one of the vans in which they carry round wild animals for exhibition; and I was frequently obliged to halt, because the people insisted upon seeing the wife of the German general and her children. . . . I must say that they were very friendly, and particularly delighted at my being able to speak to them in English.” Once and again, indeed, some rustic host or hostess could not refrain from asking her why her husband came to America in order to kill folks who had never harmed him. Such



an inquiry was regarded as quite permissible by the more plain-spoken members of a severely logical people, whose descendants, to this hour, have been unable to imagine any tenable justification for the interference of armed foreigners in a family quarrel between Great Britain and her Colonies.

The chivalry displayed by two at least of the Republican generals was in marked contrast with the conduct of the politicians. Tidings of a great national triumph circulated rapidly upon the wings of rumour; and Americans were already familiar with the emotions of victory before they learned that the fruit of their success was less complete and abundant than they had a right to anticipate. A full fortnight after the Convention was signed, the confidential aide-de-camp of General Gates arrived at the seat of government with an official account of all that had taken place at Saratoga; and three more days passed before he had put his documents in order, and submitted them to the inspection of Congress. An impatient delegate, to the amusement and delight of his colleagues, had already made a motion to compliment Colonel Wilkinson with a pair of spurs; and, when the papers were distributed to the Members, it became evident enough why Gates and his Staff had been in no special hurry to let their contents be known. That part of the despatch which related to the military operations showed, beyond all question whatever, that the American general had had the British army absolutely at his mercy; while the text of the Convention proved him to have been incapable of profiting, as a negotiator, by the magnificent opportunity which the fortune of war had placed in his grasp. Instead of being in permanent custody as prisoners, Burgoyne's troops, within ten or twelve weeks at the latest, would find themselves once again in Europe at the disposal of the British War Office. All his regiments might, and would,

be employed to garrison Mediterranean fortresses, or arsenals and dockyard towns on the Southern coast of England; and an equal number of home battalions would thereby be released for active service in America. Burgoyne, admirably supported by the martial temper and sterling patriotism of all his principal officers, had imposed his own terms, instead of accepting those dictated by his adversary. A few months afterwards, from his place in the House of Commons, — venturing upon one of those old-world literary allusions the disappearance of which has not been altogether to the advantage of Parliamentary debates, — he asserted that his own misfortune would never be classed in history with the Roman disaster of the Caudine Forks, because, under the Treaty of Saratoga, a British army had been saved to the State. As far as his own action could influence the event, that claim was true to the letter. Policy, (to quote the words of Byron in a precisely similar case,) regained what arms had lost;<sup>1</sup> and Burgoyne, by his perspicacity and firmness in the hour of defeat, had made an excellent bargain for his country.

To come off second-best in a bargain has never been to the taste of Americans; but on this occasion their national word had been sacredly pledged, and their Government was under an obligation to abide by it. The majority of Congressmen, however, were deaf to the commands of honour; and they soon had made up their minds to do the wrong thing. There were two ways of doing it; and they chose the worse. They might have boldly proclaimed that no servant of the State had power to bind the State by an engagement prejudicial to the public interest; and then they might have repudiated the Convention, and made a scapegoat of Horatio Gates. So they would have acted if they had had the courage of their unscrupulousness; but Gates was their spoiled child, and their chosen instrument for persecuting and displacing better soldiers than himself. Intent upon throwing over

<sup>1</sup> *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*; Canto I., stanza 25.

the Treaty without sacrificing the reputation of the general who made it, they deliberately confused the issue by raising a series of petty and vexatious quibbles. They made a grievance of the circumstance that the British privates, when the muskets were surrendered, did not at the same time deliver up the cartridge-boxes and the cross-belts; and they complained that the American War Office had not been furnished with a personal description of all Burgoyne's non-commissioned officers and men, similar to that which appears on the face of a European passport.

Our own commanders on land and sea, acting in perfect good faith, but blundering at every stage of the wretched business, lent themselves unintentionally, though most effectually, to the sinister designs of Congress. Lord Howe and his brother were sadly wanting in judgment and in energy. Their course was plain before them. They should have chartered all the merchantmen in New York Bay, supplemented by as many royal frigates as the case required, and should have despatched them to Boston by the first fair wind, in order to carry our troops straight home to England before the pettifoggers, who for the moment ruled the councils of America, had time to pick holes in the text of the Convention. But Sir William Howe wasted several months parleying with Congress for permission to effect the embarkation from a port in British possession, instead of from Boston harbour. This proposal, pertinaciously urged, and directly contrary to the express terms of the agreement, roused even in just-minded Americans a suspicion that, if once General Howe got General Burgoyne's soldiers within the British lines, he would incorporate them in his own army, and would never allow them to embark at all. The final and irreparable mistake was made by Burgoyne himself. Under the Seventh Clause, our officers were all to be quartered "according to their rank." General Heath, who commanded in Massachusetts, exerted himself honestly and strenuously to procure

them fitting accommodation;<sup>1</sup> but the resources of the community were limited, and some of our people were at first uncomfortably lodged. Burgoyne remonstrated in the too emphatic language which so often gushed from his pen. He especially called the attention of General Gates to the over-crowding of English officers, and declared roundly that "the public faith was broke." This most unfortunate expression provided the party leaders in Congress with the excuse for which they had long been searching. On the eighth of January, 1778, it was solemnly voted that the phrase, which the British general had used in his letter, afforded a just ground for fear lest he should avail himself of "such pretended breach of the Convention" in order to disengage himself and his army from the obligations they were under to the United States; and it was accordingly resolved that "the embarkation of Lieutenant General Burgoyne, and the troops under his command, be suspended till a distinct and explicit ratification of the Convention of Saratoga shall be properly notified by the Court of Great Britain to Congress."

Burgoyne, dismayed and repentant, protested against the unfair construction which had been placed on his hasty and ill-considered words.<sup>2</sup> But Congress was inexorable. When the fleet of transports from New York at length appeared off the Massachusetts coast they were not admitted within the forts which protected

<sup>1</sup> During the first three weeks of November, Heath's published correspondence turned almost entirely on the provision of quarters in the town of Cambridge for Burgoyne's army. On the eleventh of the month he wrote to the Council of Massachusetts: "The honor of the State is in danger; the publick faith responsible; circumstances will no longer admit of delay; decisive measures must immediately be adopted; and I cannot conceive of any so effectual as the appropriation of at least one of the Colleges." The building was taken over, and a fair rent paid to the Harvard College authorities.

<sup>2</sup> "General Burgoyne and his officers appear much disappointed, and exhibit an appearance rather of concern and uneasiness than of sulkiness or resentment, and endeavour to palliate their former expressions and conduct." William Heath to Henry Laurens; Head Quarters, Boston; Feb. 7, 1778.

the entrance to Boston harbour. The British Ministers hastened to announce themselves as willing to ratify the Treaty, and repeatedly called upon the American Government to fulfil its part of the covenant; but the Republican authorities took no notice whatever of the reminders and expostulations which reached them from Downing Street. The Convention Troops, (for such was now the official designation of Burgoyne's army,) were transplanted from Cambridge to a remote inland town south of the Potomac, where the facilities for desertion were very great, and to many British soldiers quite irresistible. More than one of the State Governments took measures to seduce our rank and file from their allegiance, and attract them into the Revolutionary army;—an ignoble expedient against which George Washington indignantly, and even passionately, remonstrated.<sup>1</sup> The American recruiting agents had very little success with the Germans, who were perfectly happy in captivity, and who had no desire to fight either for, or against, King George so long as they could draw his money. They lived for the present in a sort of financial Paradise. Without being harassed by drill, or fatigued by marches, or exposed as a mark for bullets, they were earning four times the regimental pay that they would have received in their own Fatherland; and those of them who practised handicrafts were permitted to go round the neighbourhood, working for the exceptionally high wages which skilled labour commanded in the United States. The leaders of Congress, from first to last, persisted in behaving as if the Saratoga Treaty was a spurious, or a non-existent,

<sup>1</sup> "It gives me inexpressible concern," wrote Washington, "to have repeated information, from the best authority, that the Committees of the different towns and districts in your State hire deserters from General Burgoyne's army, and employ them as substitutes, to excuse personal service of the inhabitants. I need not enlarge upon the danger of substituting, as soldiers, men who have given glaring proof of a treacherous disposition, and who are bound to us by no motives of attachment, instead of citizens, in whom the ties of country, kindred, and sometimes property, are so many securities for their fidelity." Washington to the President of the Council of Massachusetts; Valley Forge, March 17, 1778.



document. They calmly proceeded to exchange Burgoyne's officers, who were extremely impatient to get back to England, against American prisoners of equivalent rank; but otherwise none of the Convention Troops were restored to their native countries until the war was over. So late as May 1780 more than fifteen hundred of General Riedesel's Brunswickers still remained under detention, or on parole, within the borders of Virginia.

The Americans had another strong motive for ignoring the promise which had been made in their name. Before the end of 1777 it was all but certain that France would soon be at war with England on their behalf; and, under the terms of the Saratoga Convention, Burgoyne's troops might legitimately be employed against the French in the East and West Indies, or on the coasts of Normandy and Brittany. It would be no small relief to the Ministry at Versailles if General Phillips's gunners, and the Light Infantry of Lord Balcarres, were retained under lock and key as long as the war lasted; and the statesmen of Congress could not resist the temptation of doing a good turn, at the cost of their consciences, to their very obliging and open-handed ally. John Adams, who arrived in Paris early in April 1778, carried specific instructions to be beforehand with George the Third's agents in giving his own version of what was at best an equivocal story.<sup>1</sup> Adams, accordingly, seized the first opportunity of waiting upon the Comte de Vergennes, who was Louis the Sixteenth's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and communicated to him "the Resolutions of Congress respecting the suspension of Burgoyne's embarkation," which the Frenchman read through, and pronounced to be *fort bonnes*.<sup>2</sup> With that solitary tribute of approbation, proceeding

<sup>1</sup> "I have it exceedingly at heart, from a persuasion of the rectitude and justifiableness of the measures, to be in the van of the British Ministry and their emissaries at every court of Europe." Henry Laurens, the President of Congress, to John Adams; Yorktown 22 January, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Adams's Diary for April 11, 1778.

from a quarter which was neither unprejudiced nor disinterested, Americans, then and thereafter, had to be contented. Their true friends and sincere well-wishers, in all countries and in every generation, would give much if those unseemly pages could be expunged from their history. The ablest among the contemporary English chroniclers, and the most favourable to their cause, recorded his profound regret that they had so widely departed from the system of fairness, equity, and good faith which had hitherto guided their actions, and which was particularly essential to the reputation of a new State;<sup>1</sup> and his opinion has been shared by all careful and responsible writers from his day to ours. The young republic had adopted a line of conduct which ranked it, in strange and uncongenial company, below the moral level of civilised and self-respecting nations. In June and July 1808 our own Parliament and people loyally adhered to the Convention of Cintra, which restored to the Emperor Napoleon, at a critical moment of an internecine struggle, five and twenty thousand splendid troops every man of whom, in the estimation of the British public, might and should have been kept as prisoners of war in British hands. During the same months, in the same year, the semi-barbarous Junta of Seville deliberately set at nought the stipulations of the Convention of Baylen; and in 1799 the despicable South Italian Bourbons, in their thirst for vengeance, refused to observe the terms of surrender which had been granted to the garrisons of the Neapolitan citadels. The odious cruelty, which accompanied and aggravated these infringements of public faith, had no parallel in the treatment of Burgoyne and his army; but none the less, when every allowance has been made, and all excuses have been impartially considered, the violation of the Saratoga Treaty remains as a blot on the lustre of the American Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> "History of Europe" in the *Annual Register* of 1778; Chapter 10.

## CHAPTER VI

THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE. BRANDYWINE AND PAOLI.  
GERMANTOWN. THE CONTEST FOR THE DELAWARE

WHEN Sir William Howe, towards the close of June 1777, retreated from in front of Washington's impregnable position at Middlebrook, and ferried his troops back to Staten Island, the exultation in America rivalled, and even outstripped, the dissatisfaction which the news aroused in England. A powerful foe had for the third time been expelled from the main-land; New Jersey was again clear of invaders; and most of the Continental generals who had taken part in that short and prosperous campaign were inspired by a comfortable belief that their arms were irresistible. Some very strong heads were fairly turned. Nathanael Greene, indeed, had taken to heart, once and for ever, the lesson which he learned when Fort Washington fell;<sup>1</sup> but another admirable soldier abandoned himself to a fit of overconfidence which in his case was terribly premature.

Anthony Wayne had always been eager to serve under the eye of the Commander-in-Chief; and his wish was at last gratified. He now commanded one of Washington's divisions with the rank of brigadier; a position from which he was not promoted until long after the time when, by a series of rude combats and memorable exploits, he had won his place among the foremost champions in the struggle for American Independence. He never complained of being ill-treated by Congress. There was no room in his mind for dis-

<sup>1</sup> "I feel mad, vexed, sick, and sorry." Thus Greene wrote to Knox on the day after that grievous disaster. He never again discounted success beforehand.

appointed ambition or wounded vanity; for his soul was aglow with the fire of patriotism and the ardour of self-sacrifice, and he was intensely happy in the pursuit of a calling which was the absorbing passion of his life.<sup>1</sup> In early youth he had been desirous to enter the Royal Army. But a commission in a marching regiment, to his father's judgment, seemed a very poor livelihood for a colonist with no family or political claims on the favour of the British War Office; and so Anthony Wayne imitated the example of George Washington, and became a land-surveyor. His work lay far out to the West, in front of the advancing zone of civilisation; and the hardships and adventures of the wilderness, together with the accurate and comprehensive observation of natural objects which his business demanded, trained him for the work of a general at least as effectually as if he had been kicking his heels in an English or an Irish garrison town. Wayne was thirty years old when the fighting began; and he at once threw up a profession in which he was making money fast, raised a battalion of infantry, and was appointed its colonel. He tried to teach himself the art of war out of very old books; and he had a strong, and vehemently expressed, predilection for the old methods. Anthony Wayne loved to see troops smart and tidy even under the most adverse circumstances.<sup>2</sup> He frankly acknowledged that he had "an insuperable

<sup>1</sup> *Major General Anthony Wayne, and the Pennsylvanian Line in the Continental Army*; by Charles J. Stillé, President of the Historical Society in Pennsylvania: Chapter I. Wayne's schoolmaster, who was likewise his uncle, wrote thus to his father: "What he may be best qualified for I know not. He may perhaps make a soldier. He has already distracted the brains of the boys under my charge by rehearsals of battles and sieges. During noon, in place of the usual games and amusements, he has the boys employed in throwing up redoubts."

<sup>2</sup> In July 1776 Wayne appointed a barber to each company in his regiment for the purpose of shaving the privates, and dressing their hair; and that order was issued when his soldiers had just returned, starved and almost naked, from a frightful campaign in Canada, having lost, (as has been truly said,) "almost everything belonging to them except their hair and their beards."

bias" in favour of an elegant uniform and a martial bearing, and that he would prefer to take his men under fire neatly clothed and well set up, with bayonets fixed and a single charge of ammunition, rather than lead them into action shabby and dirty, with rifles and full powder horns. His implicit belief in the bayonet was soon to receive an unwelcome, and indeed a tragical, confirmation.

Wayne had recently been engaged in an aggressive operation on a small scale, which was vigorously conducted, and had resulted in success. He was now in tearing spirits; and he joyfully prognosticated, in letters to his friends, that it would be a long while before seven hundred English infantry would again venture to face five hundred of his own Pennsylvanians. Washington was not responsible for the contents of all the post-bags which left his camp; and, when the Royal army retired from New Jersey, he was very far from sharing the triumphant exhilaration with which some among his principal lieutenants viewed the backs of their departing adversaries. The July and August of 1777 were among the most anxious months in George Washington's perplexed and hazardous existence. He had learned from his spies that the British transports were being fitted with horse-boxes, and stored with water, forage, and provisions for a month's voyage; and the purport of that voyage was still enveloped in a fog of mystery which, up to this time, had very seldom enshrouded Sir William Howe's strategical secrets. The expedition might be destined for an attack upon Charleston, or Boston, or (still more probably) upon Philadelphia; but Washington, who, in a case of doubt, always credited his opponent with the most sane and rational intentions, could not divest himself of a suspicion that the British general was getting ready to sail up the Hudson River in the direction of Albany. The American army was accordingly moved north towards Peekskill and the New York Highlands, in order to prevent the junction of Howe and Burgoyne, and so



rescue Schuyler from what otherwise would be inevitable destruction. The situation, (to use Washington's own words,) was truly delicate and embarrassing. In half a score of letters he described the uncertainties which beset him as distressing beyond measure, and intricate out of all comprehension; and, though he spared his troops as much as possible, he admitted with regret that they were harassed by marching and countermarching to an extent which was almost unendurable.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the third week in July all but forty ships, of an immense British fleet, had dropped down from New York City, and were lying in the Narrows at the entrance of the Bay. Three days afterwards they put out to sea; and on the last of the month Washington was informed that more than two hundred sail had appeared in the estuary of the Delaware with the obvious intention of going up the river, and assaulting Philadelphia. He himself, in advance of his army, was already well on his way towards that city when he was encountered by the astounding intelligence that the British vessels were no longer between the Capes of the Delaware. After a stay of four and twenty hours they had turned their bowsprits eastwards, and, with a fair wind behind them, had once more vanished into the illimitable. This surprising event, (as Washington called it,) completed the mystification of that much vexed general; and he determined to stay his hand until some clearer light was thrown upon the insoluble problem of Sir William Howe's plan of action. "The fatigue and injury," (so he told his brother,) "which men must sustain by long marches in such extreme

<sup>1</sup> Washington to the President of Congress, Camp at Middlebrook, July 2, 1777; to Major General Armstrong, Morristown, 4 July; to Governor Cooke, July 7; to the President of Congress, July 10; to Major General Schuyler, Eleven Miles within the Clove, July 22; to Governor Trumbull, Philadelphia, August 4; and a letter to John Augustine Washington, which reviews the events of the preceding five weeks, written on the fifteenth of August.

heat as we have felt for the last five days must keep us quiet till we hear something of the destination of the enemy." Washington quartered his troops in some pleasant meadows which bordered the cool and limpid stream of the Neshaminy, just twenty miles to the North of Philadelphia; and there he possessed his soul in such patience as he was able to command. The omens were harder to interpret than ever; but, upon the whole, he inclined to the belief that Sir William Howe's cruise to the mouth of the Delaware was a feint made for the purpose of drawing the American army away from Albany, and that he now had doubled back to the assistance of Burgoyne.<sup>1</sup> This, at best, would have been a complicated, and a very precarious, stratagem; but it was infinitely less eccentric than the movement which the British Commander-in-Chief had in reality adopted.<sup>2</sup>

After the interval of a fortnight the royal fleet reappeared — not outside Boston Harbour; not at Sandy Hook; not once again in the Delaware River; but at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, ninety leagues down the coast from New York. Ten more days were consumed in slowly and painfully ascending the interminable gulf; and at last, on the twenty-fifth of August, the Royal army was put ashore at the Head of Elk in the State of Maryland, at a point ten miles more distant from Philadelphia than it had reached in the previous December; only ten miles nearer that city than the spot from which it had retreated in June; and exactly thirteen miles across country from the port of Newcastle on the Delaware River, where Sir William Howe might, with perfect

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Major General Putnam, August 1, 1777; to John Augustine Washington, August 5; to Putnam again, August 5.

<sup>2</sup> This total disappearance of the Royal army, for the space of three summer weeks, was most tantalising to all the newsmongers. "The Howes," wrote Horace Walpole, "are gone the Lord knows whither, and have carried the American war with them, so there is nothing to say on that head; which is a great drawback on correspondence in the *shooting season*." Walpole to the Countess of Ossory: Sept. 29, 1777.

facility, have landed his whole force before the close of July.<sup>1</sup> In order to obtain this infinitesimal result the British general had squandered a whole month of priceless hours in the very heart of the military season. He had prolonged his voyage by three hundred and fifty unnecessary miles, exposing to the risks of the ocean his unwieldy crowd of thirteen score vessels;<sup>2</sup> and demoralising his soldiers, on the eve of a critical campaign, by a protracted spell of idleness and relaxed discipline, aggravated by much distress and discomfort. They had endured one night of tempest, and enough foul weather to make the most of them sea-sick; but generally speaking the wind was dead, and the heat almost insupportable. The ponderous armada, for long spaces of time together, moved at the rate of a knot an hour; and row-boats went about from ship to ship in quest of fresh provisions, or a few butts of drinkable water. For the supply in the tanks soon ran low, and became most offensive to taste and smell; the men had to be put on very short allowance; and great numbers of horses were thrown overboard as a humane alternative to letting them perish of thirst. The fierce sun, which had been very trying even on the open sea, was almost intolerable on the close waters of Chesapeake Bay. Our troops sate all day on deck, packed between the bulwarks under the scorching rays; for the cabins were as stifling and fetid as the hold of a West Indian slaver. But they did not need pity so much as the brave Englishmen who, in the far-off region of Lake Champlain and

<sup>1</sup> The course, and the length, of Howe's digression are illustrated by an outline map of the sea-coast to the south of New York, which is enclosed in a corner of the larger map at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> A full and authentic narrative of the expedition exists in the journal of Captain John Montrésor, the Chief Engineer of Sir William Howe's army. Captain Montrésor put the total number of British vessels at two hundred and sixty-six. American spectators counted two hundred and twenty ships as the fleet went past Annapolis, nearly three quarters of the way up the gulf of the Chesapeake. By that time the worst sailers, — and many were very bad, — had been left far out of sight to the rearward.

the upper Hudson, looked wistfully for the help which failed to come. In the last third of August matters had begun to go badly with Burgoyne; and his staff officers were already straining their ears to catch the sound of Howe's cannon while that strange comrade, after eight and twenty days' sail in the wrong direction, was fighting the tides by day, and lying at anchor by night, four hundred and fifty miles away among the mud-banks of Virginia.

Howe was deeply to blame; but another great man had been concerned in the business whose negligence and folly were nothing less than criminal. When Lord George Germaine had planned a combined movement against Albany from three remote quarters, he should have sent precise and minute directions to all the three commanders, and especially to that general whose army was twice as large as the two other columns together. But, as a matter of fact, Sir William Howe never received any definite orders at all. He had not been consulted about the proposed invasion from Canada; he had always disapproved of it; and he had dutifully kept Germaine informed of his own intentions to attack Philadelphia by sea. On the twenty-sixth of March the London War Office transmitted to him a copy of the letter of instructions addressed to Governor Carleton and General Burgoyne; and that letter contained a sentence to the effect that the Secretary of State would communicate with Sir William Howe by the next packet. No such communication ever reached Howe; but nearly two months afterwards, on the eighteenth of May, Germaine wrote to him at great length, acquiescing in the expedition to Philadelphia, and incidentally expressing a vague hope that his Pennsylvanian campaign might be concluded in time for him to co-operate with the army which was moving south from Canada. When that despatch at length overtook Sir William Howe, he was already in Chesapeake Bay. That was a sample of the vigilance and the punctuality which Lord George Germaine, sitting in

William Pitt's old office-chair, applied to the work of organising victory in America.<sup>1</sup>

There is reason to believe that some words of advice had lately reached the British General from a very singular quarter. General Charles Lee was still a prisoner at New York, in strict custody. Eager to curry favour with his captors, he appears to have laid before Sir William Howe and his brother a memorial suggesting an armed occupation of the Central Colonies, and assuring them, from his own certain knowledge, that Marylanders and Pennsylvanians were nearly all Tories at heart, and would flock in crowds to the Royal standard as soon as it was planted within their borders. The invasion of Pennsylvania may have been recommended by Lee, and it undoubtedly was sanctioned by Germaine; but Howe's notion of approaching Philadelphia by the Bay of Chesapeake, when he had already come within a few miles of it by the Bay of Delaware, was entirely his own; and it has furnished military critics with his measure as a strategist.

However circuitous had been his journey, and however many weeks he might have spent upon the way, Sir William Howe was on the spot at last. His presence at the Head of Elk was an untoward phenomenon in the eyes of George Washington. A larger force of British infantry than had contended at Dettingen, — gallant and well-equipped veterans who in the course of this war had gained several victories, and had never yet been worsted in a general engagement,

<sup>1</sup> An explanation of Lord George's silence is now in some of the histories; but it should be received with caution, if not with incredulity. It is stated that a letter, giving Sir William Howe positive and explicit orders to co-operate with Burgoyne, had been drafted in the English War Office at the end of March; but that Germaine went out of town before it was fair-copied, and forgot to sign and send it. To anyone who has had charge of a public department, — with Permanent Secretaries, and Private Secretaries, to keep him in mind of his duties, — the story is unbelievable. It has its origin in a private memoir by Lord Shelburne; but Lord Shelburne, when jotting down reminiscences in the seclusion of his study, was no safe authority for anecdotes reflecting upon the public men of his own time.



— stood within five days' march of the capital of the Confederacy. They were commanded by a leader whose reputation would be hopelessly ruined unless on this occasion he fought the war to an end ; and who, though ill qualified to direct the abstruse operations of an extensive campaign, had never failed, when in actual contact with an enemy, to handle his troops with skill and coolness, and with a dogged resolution which would accept of no denial. Howe, moreover, was in stronger force than his adversary. Washington, who some months previously sent two of his best brigades to the assistance of Schuyler, within the last week had deprived himself of Colonel Morgan's invaluable corps of riflemen in order to strengthen General Gates for the final and decisive struggle at Saratoga. An attempt had been made to fill the void in the ranks of the main Republican army by calling out the militia of Maryland and Pennsylvania. But those States were less than half-hearted in the cause of the Revolution, and only ten or twelve hundred of their sons appeared under arms in the camp on the Neshaminy ;— a humbling contrast to the multitude of New Englanders who were mustering at Stillwater to oppose Burgoyne. Washington could put in line just eleven thousand Americans against seventeen thousand of the best soldiers in Europe. And yet, however unequal might be the odds and poor the chances, he was determined not to surrender Philadelphia without a battle. He instinctively felt that so open a confession of inferiority, — made at the very outset of the Pennsylvanian campaign, and with Burgoyne still unbeaten in the North, — would damp the spirit of the rebellion, and bring about, in all likelihood, a total collapse of the national resistance.

Washington, nearly a week after date, received intelligence that the British fleet had been seen in Chesapeake Bay. He at once set his troops in motion ; and the very next evening he encamped five miles to the northward of Philadelphia. On Sunday the twenty-fourth of August he held what in that poverty-stricken army

passed for a dress-parade, and marched his whole force through the main avenues of the city. His men had long ago walked through their boot-soles. Their clothes were parti-coloured, and discoloured, and for the most part in rags and tatters; and the least badly dressed among them were those who wore the hunting-shirt of brown linen.<sup>1</sup> It was remarked that they did not step in time, nor hold their heads erect, nor cock their hats at one and the same angle. But they had secured a certain amount of uniformity by decking themselves with green boughs; the horses were in fine condition, fresh from a fortnight's rest in luxuriant pastures; the drums and fifes did their utmost; and the Stars and Stripes on the regimental flags were, to many of the spectators, a new and deeply interesting sight. The crowd cheered lustily as the long column passed down Front Street and up Chestnut Street, — a swaying mass all alive with rustling foliage and glittering gun-barrels, and nobly headed by George Washington on his most stately charger. At his side rode a French nobleman who had already seen enough of American infantry to pronounce them fine and warlike troops, commanded by officers of zeal and courage.<sup>2</sup> He was no bad judge of a soldier; for ever since the age of fifteen he had been a Black Musketeer of King Louis's household.

That dreary period of suspense, through which Washington of late was passing, had been lighted up for him by one bright and very memorable episode. The Marquis de Lafayette was a conspicuous member of the rising generation in France. He was a typical aristocrat, bred up under the usual conditions, and endowed with all the real or supposed advantages, of his class. He had six Christian names, of which the first was Marie. As a matter of course he was a soldier, and had been married while still a boy to a mere child, — a daughter of the Duc d'Ayen, the head of the house of de Noailles; but, (which was by no means a matter of course,) he

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de ma main; jusqu'en l'année 1780, du Général Lafayette.*

<sup>2</sup> Lafayette's *Mémoires*.

dearly loved both his wife and his profession. The youthful couple had been in high favour with Madame du Barry during the last months of her sway; and, when Marie Antoinette became Queen, they were among the chosen few who, to the intense jealousy of the excluded and the uninitiated, were admitted to the private theatricals, and the fancy-dress quadrilles, which were the pastimes of the royal household. But now, at the age of nineteen, Lafayette was a stern Republican, and on that account only the more popular in a society prone to amuse itself with abstract opinions, the portentous and inevitable consequences of which were less distant than the triflers, or even the philosophers and the statesmen, could then foresee. The Declaration of American Independence roused him like a call to boot and saddle. Here at length was a republic, which from across the ocean looked as pure and austere as the Rome of Fabricius or Camillus; and Lafayette slept on thorns until he could place at the disposal of the sacred cause his military skill and valour, and, (a much rarer commodity in the American Confederacy,) his abundance of hard cash. His project soon became known in the upper circles both of France and England, which then were in close and habitual contact. All Paris was discussing the "young courtier, with a pretty wife, a small family, and an income of fifty thousand crowns a year,"<sup>1</sup> who was abandoning the first two, and taking with him as much of the last as he could scrape together, in order to go to the assistance of the American insurgents. Madame du Deffand duly imparted to Horace Walpole the romantic story, which she regarded as the most interesting news of the day. "Of course," she said, "it is a piece of folly; but it does him no discredit. He receives more praise than blame." "We talk chiefly," (so Gibbon wrote from London,) "of the Marquis de la Fayette. He is about twenty, with 130,000 Livres a year; the nephew of

<sup>1</sup> The Chevalier de Marais to his mother in the country. The letter is quoted in *The Life of General Lafayette*, by Bayard Tuckerman.

Noailles, who is ambassador here. He has bought the Duke of Kingston's yacht, and is gone to join the Americans. The Court *appears* to be angry with him."<sup>1</sup>

No one was really angry with him; for he was as good a fellow as Charles Fox, beneath a modest, and even embarrassed, demeanour which conciliated far more than it repelled. Marie Antoinette was personally very fond of the English;<sup>2</sup> but, with an inconsistency pardonable to a royal beauty of one-and-twenty, she took a warm interest in Lafayette and his fortunes. Everybody wished well to his enterprise, but everybody was afraid that he never would come back alive; for the men of his race had seldom died old, or elsewhere than on the field of battle.<sup>3</sup> He consulted the Comte de Broglie; and the old warrior tried to turn him from his purpose in pathetic language. "I saw your uncle," (he said,) "fall in the Italian wars. I was present when your father was killed at Minden; and I will not have on my conscience the destruction of the only branch which remains to the family." But, before the interview was at an end, de Broglie had not only promised to guard the young man's secret, but had agreed to put him in relations with Baron de Kalb, an officer of advanced years, who knew the American colonies of old and who could speak English well. In the early spring of 1777 Lafayette, as a blind, paid a visit to his wife's uncle, the French Ambassador in London. He danced at a ball given by Lord George Germaine, and was introduced to Lord Rawdon and Sir Henry Clinton, who had come back from New York for a winter's pleasure in the interval between two campaigns. But he made no attempt to disguise his

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon to Holroyd; April 12, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> "I hear Lady Stormont is a great favourite at Paris. The Queen pays her every possible respect, and has made a very fine ball for her; but the English are the greatest favourites she has." Letter from Lady Knight to Mrs. Drake; Toulouse, October 6, 1776.

<sup>3</sup> "Les Lafayette étaient réputés pour tomber tous sur les champs de bataille, et de bonne heure." Doniol, Vol. I., page 654.

sympathy with the American rebels ; and, attentive to the dictates of honour, he declined an invitation given by King George himself to inspect the military and naval preparations that were in progress at Portsmouth.

Meanwhile a ship had been secured for him, over the purchase and outfit of which he was horribly cheated ; for in his eagerness to depart he set his name without examination to any and every paper that was placed before him. His worst difficulties began after his return from England ; for Lord Stormont, our ambassador at Paris, remonstrated sharply ; and the French government intimated to the Duc d'Ayen that he would do well to apply for a *lettre de cachet*, and to carry off his son-in-law on a protracted family tour in Italy. Lafayette eloped to the coast in disguise, after a series of curious adventures and hair-breadth escapes like those which, half a generation afterwards, befell the unhappy aristocrats who were flying from the guillotine ;<sup>1</sup> and before the close of April he stood out to sea in his slow and ill-supplied vessel, with Baron de Kalb, and ten or twelve other officers, on board. They suffered greatly from the rolling and tossing, from bad eating and drinking, and from fear of the British cruisers. Lafayette, who got well sooner than his companions, employed the immense leisure of ocean travel in studying English, and reading military books, in order to qualify himself for being a Major General, — a rank which he regarded as “a brevet of immortality.”<sup>2</sup> On the fifty-fourth day after leaving Europe he touched land at the mouth of a river in South Carolina, about twenty leagues to the North of Charleston.

The party reached Philadelphia on the twenty-seventh July, after a tedious, and exceedingly expensive, journey of six hundred miles through a country which

<sup>1</sup> Lafayette, in the dress of a courier, rode ahead of the post-chaise, and ordered relays of horses. He slept on straw in the stables ; and he was recognised by an innkeeper's daughter, whose mouth he closed by a warning gesture.

<sup>2</sup> A Madame Lafayette ; à bord de la Victoire, ce 30 Mai, 1777.



the others thought unattractive and barbarous, but which everywhere presented itself to Lafayette's fancy as an enchanted land. Franklin and Deane had despatched from France a letter informing Congress that a nobleman of great wealth had bought a ship, and had started across the Atlantic to take service in the American army; that he was extremely beloved in his own country; and that any compliment which could be paid him would be pleasing, not only to his powerful relations and to the Court, but to the whole French nation.<sup>1</sup> That letter, however, had not yet come to hand; and, — while the coffee-houses in Paris were echoing with Lafayette's name, and the theatres were vociferously applauding any passage which could be construed into an allusion to his expedition, — he and his comrades met with a chilling and humiliating reception in Philadelphia. Congress made them wait in the street while a delegate was fetched who spoke their language, and who was kept near at hand for the express purpose of sending foreign officers about their business. This gentleman indicated to them, in very intelligible French, that they were a parcel of adventurers, and that Philadelphia contained far too many of their sort already.<sup>2</sup>

Lafayette restrained his temper, and drew up a short note glancing at the sacrifices which he had made for the American cause. He claimed nothing in return, except the right of serving that cause at his own expense, and in the character of a volunteer. Congress, impressed by his proud and quiet tone, and acknowledging him as a very uncommon specimen of the foreign mercenary, nominated him an unattached Major General without command, and without pay; but the

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane to the Committee of Foreign Affairs; Paris, May 25, 1777. Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence*; Vol. II., page 322.

<sup>2</sup> An exceedingly amusing account of these proceedings may be found in the Memoir of a French officer in Lafayette's train, which was mentioned in the second chapter of this volume.

rest of his followers, with the exception of Baron de Kalb, were sent back to France at the cost of the American Treasury.<sup>1</sup> A few days afterwards Lafayette met Washington at a public banquet, and recognised him "among a throng of officers and civilians by the majesty of his stature and his countenance."<sup>2</sup> The young French courtier was now at last in the presence of a real king. Washington received him graciously, bade him welcome to America, and invited him to become one of his military family if he could put up with very much worse dinners than those to which he had been accustomed at Versailles. That was the commencement of a lifelong friendship. Lafayette made Washington his hero and his model; and Washington soon came to regard Lafayette as that which Nature had denied him,—a son.<sup>3</sup> History has seldom had to tell of a more honourable connection between two men more unselfishly devoted to great principles.

On the twenty-fifth of August, 1777, the British began to disembark in the northeast corner of Maryland. It was no easy matter. The upper reaches of Chesapeake Bay were intricate and perilous even for single ships; and the navigation of those waters was believed by the Republican authorities in Philadelphia to be impossible for a convoy of two hundred transports, with at least the average proportion of inexpert and

<sup>1</sup> In the French Officer's Memoir the American names are sometimes quite unrecognisable. "Monsieur de Canoite" undoubtedly stands for "Conway;" but "le sieur Moose, membre de Congrôis," most certainly cannot be identified among the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He possibly was Robert Morris.

<sup>2</sup> Lafayette's *Memoirs*.

<sup>3</sup> General Matthieu Dumas relates how, in the autumn of 1780, Washington paid a visit to Rochambeau's headquarters accompanied by the principal members of his staff. "I was particularly impressed," Dumas wrote, "by the marks of affection which the General displayed for his pupil, and son of adoption, the Marquis de Lafayette. He watched him with complacency as they sat opposite each other at table, and listened to all he said with visible interest."

unhandy skippers. The Elk River itself was full of shoals and sandbanks; but Lord Howe took personal charge of the operation, and expended upon it that minute and systematic energy which he threw into every professional act of his protracted, and deservedly successful, career. Boats were carefully stationed to mark out the points of danger; the larger vessels ploughed a channel through the muddy bar; and the Admiral's flag-ship, for the time being, was always the man-of-war which had made its way farthest to the front.<sup>1</sup> Before dark on the twenty-sixth every soldier, field-piece, and waggon had been safely landed; and orders were issued to march at three in the morning on the morrow. But that very night it turned to rain, and continued raining for six and thirty hours. The roads were reported to be impassable for such of the famished horses as had survived that dreadful voyage; and all the biscuits and cartridges, served out to the troops, were spoiled in the pouches. The Guards alone lost sixteen thousand rounds of ammunition. Moreover the conduct of affairs had passed, from the brother who subdued difficulties, to the brother who, too often, made them an excuse for supineness and delay. Not before the third of September did the Royal troops commence their march; and during the next seven days they advanced just ten miles.

Sir William Howe was encountered from the very outset by a grave disappointment. He had come a hundred and twenty leagues out of his road in order to open the campaign in a region where the population was supposed to be exceptionally loyal; but on his arrival he nowhere found anything except lukewarmness and suspicion, while in most localities he met with nobody at all. He had put out an offer of protection to the peaceably disposed subjects of his Majesty in the Colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania; but the ex-

<sup>1</sup> "The Admiral performed the different parts of a commander, inferior officer, and pilot with his usual ability and perseverance." *Annual Register* for 1777.

periences of the preceding winter in New Jersey had taught the people of every province in the Confederacy what such a proclamation was worth. The most common political sentiment in all the districts which lay along the west bank of the Delaware River was an impartial desire to be left alone by both political parties; and farmers were equally afraid of being plundered by the Hessians, and of being persecuted as Loyalists by the Republican committees after the Royal army had retired from their neighbourhood. "The inhabitants," wrote Richard Fitzpatrick, "are almost all fled from their houses, and have driven their cattle with them: so we do not live very luxuriously, though in a country that has every appearance of plenty, and is more beautiful than can be conceived wherever the woods are at all cleared."<sup>1</sup>

Washington meanwhile, on his own element, was as busy as Admiral Howe among the shallows of Chesapeake Bay. He stayed on at Elk Town after the Royal ships were already well within the Elk River, packing off the public stores; and seeing that granaries were emptied, and horses and carts removed, all along the line of road which the British were bound to follow in their advance upon Philadelphia. He spent three days in reconnoitring the country between his own headquarters at Wilmington, and Howe's outposts, — at great risk to himself and his companions. Franklin, with a touch of sentiment unusual in official despatches, had begged Congress to see that Lafayette was not killed in battle, for the sake of his "beautiful young wife," who was expecting a baby; and he had therefore recommended that the Marquis should be placed under the protecting wing of the Commander-in-Chief himself. Franklin should by this time have known George

<sup>1</sup> Richard Fitzpatrick to Lady Ossory; Camp near the head of Elk River, Maryland, September, 1777. Fitzpatrick had lately joined Howe's army. "Nothing in the world," (he wrote from New York in July,) "can be so disagreeable and odious to me as being obliged to serve in this execrable war."

Washington better. That true Virginian, whether in war or in the chase, went fearlessly wherever a good horse could carry him; and on more than one occasion Howe's skirmishes had a very near view indeed of a soberly dressed officer mounted on a powerful bay charger, who did not shirk his fences, and who was closely attended everywhere by an aide-de-camp in a rich foreign uniform. The American generals now began to regret the absence of Colonel Morgan and his five hundred marksmen. Anthony Wayne suggested that a picked body of troops should be told off for special service, "after the example of Julius Cæsar at the siege of Alesia;"<sup>1</sup> and Washington, without going so far back for a precedent, selected a hundred rank and file from each of his brigades, and confided them to the charge of General Maxwell, who was accounted a fighting officer. Maxwell displayed activity, and tried his strength against Howe's advance-guard in a warm encounter;<sup>2</sup> but he was ill supported by the local militia, and it soon became evident that the American army at Wilmington was in too exposed a situation for safety. On the ninth of September Washington retreated northwards, and arrayed his troops upon the farther side of Brandywine Creek, just where the little river was traversed by the main highway to Philadelphia.

In those primitive times there were few bridges; and the traffic passed through the water at Chad's Ford, ten or a dozen miles above the point of confluence where Brandywine Creek was lost in the broad and stately current of the Delaware. Below the ford the stream ran swift, deep, and narrow between precipitous banks; and that portion of Washington's line was sufficiently guarded by a small detachment of not

<sup>1</sup> Wayne to Washington; Camp at Wilmington, Sept. 2, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The future Lord Harris was shot through the leg in this skirmish, and was reduced to follow the army in a chaise. At the battle of Brandywine he had the horse taken out of the shafts, and rode it bare-backed at the head of his company across the ford, and over the enemy's breastworks, before the doctors could again lay hands on him.



very trustworthy militia. Anthony Wayne held the ford, which was protected by intrenchments, and raked by no fewer than three batteries. Next in order came Nathanael Greene, and his two well-drilled brigades; while Sullivan, with three weak divisions, stood farther up the creek to the right. The position was very strong indeed as against an unenterprising adversary. In order to turn the right flank of the Americans, the British would have to march almost as many miles as they had contrived to cover during the whole of the past fortnight. If Washington was attacked in front, he felt confident that he could repulse his enemy. If, on the other hand, Howe went dawdling up-stream, in search of a practicable ford, with half the Royal army, Washington would have ample time to re-cross the river, and defeat the other half long before his dilatory opponent re-appeared upon the scene of action.<sup>1</sup> But an unpleasant surprise was in store for the American general. Throughout the next forty-eight hours Sir William Howe was at his very best; and Washington found himself confronted,—not by the slothful and over-cautious strategist of the Jersey campaigns,—but by the high-mettled warrior who had stormed the redoubt at Bunker's Hill, and the consummate tactician who had rolled up Putnam's left and centre in headlong rout on Long Island. Howe's plan for forcing the passage of the Brandywine was faultless; and it was carried out, from first to last, with rare exactitude and notable vigour. No time was wasted; none of his fighting strength was hoarded or squandered; and all his troops were taken promptly and resolutely into battle, the best first.

On Wednesday the tenth September the Royal forces were collected around the Quaker meeting-house at Kennet Square in Chester County,—a well-chosen rendezvous, distant enough from the enemy to baffle observation, and near enough for early and decisive

<sup>1</sup> All the military events related in this, and the three subsequent, chapters can be traced in the larger map at the end of the volume.

action on the morrow. Howe divided his regiments into two powerful columns, and confided them to two first-rate officers, Lieutenant General von Knyphausen and Lord Cornwallis. He informed them both of the services which he expected from them, and thenceforward left them to the unhampered guidance of their own judgment. At four in the morning Cornwallis started in the direction of the fords which crossed the upper Forks of the Brandywine far away in the north-west quarter. Sir William Howe rode with him, not because he distrusted his capacity as a leader, but because it was in the company of Cornwallis that the sharpest fighting would most probably be witnessed. An hour afterwards, von Knyphausen began his march; drove through the river Maxwell's people, who had been advantageously posted on the southern bank; opened fire from his numerous artillery; and made ostentatious arrangements for an assault upon the centre of the hostile position. His threatening attitude fixed the attention, and perturbed the mind, of the American commander. Washington had been informed that some Royal troops were moving northwards, parallel to the Brandywine River; but the reports which reached him about their apparent strength, and their rate of progress, were in a high degree confused and contradictory. He had not the means of getting at the positive truth, because he was very weak in cavalry, and his generals of division counted the horsemen whom he was able to place at their disposal, not by regiments or by squadrons, but by units.<sup>1</sup> His morning passed away amidst distracting doubts and varying counsels; but certainty at length arrived in the shape of a brief note from General Sullivan, who announced that the British had appeared in rear of his right, coming down on him in great force. Two brigades of them were already within two miles of

<sup>1</sup> "I have never," wrote Sullivan, "had any light horse with me since I joined the army. I found four when I came to Brentford's Ford, two of whom I sent off with Captain Hazen to Jones's Ford." Sullivan to Washington; Oct. 24, 1777.

his position ; and they were followed by a cloud of dust stretching far back into the interior of the country.

Washington instantaneously despatched General Sullivan with orders to plant the whole of his command athwart the path of the advancing enemy, who by this time were very near a place of worship frequented by the Quakers of Birmingham Township ; for on that day, by the irony of fate, the British troops began their march to battle from one Friends' meeting-house, and came into collision with their adversaries in the immediate neighbourhood of another.<sup>1</sup> Sullivan, by no fault of his own, had started half an hour too late. One of his three divisions, and a brigade in another, were led by worthless generals. The woods were puzzling. The soldiers, though they could travel quick and shoot straight, were slow and awkward at their tactical evolutions ; and the various sections of the American line had not yet got into touch before the flower of the Royal infantry came sweeping forward, eager for combat, and in perfect order.

Cornwallis knew when to hurry, and when to take his time. He had pressed the pace for ten consecutive hours over sixteen miles of rough and unexplored country ; and then he halted till the rear of his column had closed up, and deployed his whole force as coolly and methodically as if he were in Hyde Park or on Hounslow Heath. In front were the Guards, the grenadiers and light infantry, and the Hessian Chasseurs ; while eight English battalions, twelve hundred Germans, and two squadrons of cavalry followed in support, or in reserve. Their right flank was secured by the Brandywine River ; and with everything which stood in front of them they were themselves prepared to deal. Cornwallis gave the word. His troops charged, and at both extremities of the line they charged home. Two bri-

<sup>1</sup> In those sparsely settled, but essentially civilised communities, the churches, the Court-houses, — and, it must be admitted, the taverns, — were frequently planted at the intersection of the main roads, and played a prominent part in the topography of the war.

gades, on the American right, broke and fled; and Sullivan's own division, after a short resistance, escaped in disorder to the rear. Lord Stirling, in the centre, had come early on to the ground, and had found time to plant his cannon, and draw up his battalions, in accordance with his own rigid notions of military perfection. He repelled the attacks delivered by the troops in front of him; and he made a stout fight of it even when some victorious British regiments, which had disposed of their own opponents, clustered in on him from several quarters. Sullivan, after vainly trying to rally the fugitives of his own division, exerted himself with desperate valour to maintain this last fragment of his line of battle. Two of his aides-de-camp were killed. Lafayette, — who had begged, or taken, leave of absence from Washington's side, — hastened in the direction of the music to the sound of which so many of his progenitors had died; and was badly wounded while, sword in hand and dismounted, he was making himself busy in the thick of the tumult. At last, but not until the English were everywhere within pistol-range, the Republicans gave way, and threw themselves into the forest.

General von Knyphausen, a veteran who could interpret the symptoms of a battle, had already observed large bodies of Americans filing off northwards on the other side of the river. After a certain interval of time his ears were greeted by a burst of artillery fire, which he recognised as the voice of Cornwallis. Then he sent his infantry across Chad's Ford in a dense succession of regiments, distinguished one from another by numerals which are all of them so many titles of honour in the estimation of an old-fashioned Englishman. The Fourth Foot, the Fifth Foot, the Seventy-first Glasgow Highlanders, and the Twenty-third Fusiliers splashed through the water, scrambled up the bank, ran over the ditch and parapet, and captured a hostile breastwork with many of the defenders, and all the cannon. They drove the Republicans before them, in a running fight, from one enclosure to another; until the British Guards,

— who had lost their way in the thicket, but had kept their faces in the right direction, — stumbled up against Anthony Wayne's retreating battalions, and scattered them in hopeless rout. Washington's army was now caught between two bodies of troops, advancing at right angles to each other from two widely separated points, and meeting at last on the field of victory. The Americans were exactly in the same plight as the Austrians at Sadowa, and the French at Waterloo; and they would have fared as badly as either of them, if Washington had lost his presence of mind in that moment of disaster and incipient panic. He already had sent off Nathanael Greene to the assistance of Sullivan. He himself rode northwards to the sound of the cannon at headlong speed; while Greene's infantry did their best to prove that Virginians, in case of necessity, were quite capable of getting across country on foot.<sup>1</sup> They marched and ran four miles in forty-two minutes; and their commander had just time enough to post them across a defile, some furlongs to the rear of Dilworth village, before Cornwallis was upon him. It was the first occasion that the two famous captains, whose chivalrous antagonism signalised and dignified the later history of the war, encountered each other on anything approaching to equal terms. Their soldiers were hotly engaged during an hour, — or what seemed to them an hour, — at a distance of not more than fifty yards apart along a very narrow front.<sup>2</sup> At length Greene slowly drew off

<sup>1</sup> When the distant firing began, Washington requested a Mr. Joseph Brown to guide him to the front by the shortest cut. Brown was an elderly man, and made many excuses; but he was hoisted on to a charger and forced to lead the way to Birmingham Meeting-house at a gallop, with the General and the Staff behind him. "Brown said that the horse leapt all the fences without difficulty, and was followed in like manner by the others. The head of General Washington's horse was constantly at the flank of the one on which he himself was mounted; and the General was continually repeating to him: 'Push along, old man. Push along, old man.'"

<sup>2</sup> *Diary of Lieutenant James MacMichael.* This was an officer in a Pennsylvanian regiment which, after the defeat of its own division, attached itself to General Greene, and remained with him till night-fall.



his troops, and disappeared into the darkness unpursued, and, (so far as he himself was concerned,) undefeated. His skill and valour, and the late hour, — for the battle did not begin in earnest until half-past four in the afternoon, — enabled the rest of the Republican army to get safe away to Chester on the Delaware River, thirteen good miles from the field of battle. That battle was won by bold and judicious manœuvres; but the event had not been finally decided without a good deal of close and obstinate fighting. Nearly six hundred British and Germans were killed or wounded; and the Americans lost eleven pieces of artillery, and above a thousand men, of whom the third part were prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

The Schuylkill River was thenceforward the sole remaining obstacle between the Royal army and the capital city of the rebellion. On the twentieth of September Washington lay in camp at Potsgrove, about five and thirty miles up stream from Philadelphia. The British were south of the river, in the neighbourhood of Valley Forge; and Wayne's division had been detached across the Schuylkill with orders to fall upon Sir William Howe's rear-guard, and capture his train of baggage. The situation of these exposed and isolated Americans was hazardous in the extreme; but the prospect had no terrors, and immense attractions, for their sanguine and intrepid general. "There never," (so he wrote to Washington,) "was or will be a finer opportunity of giving the enemy a fatal blow than at present. For God's sake push on as fast as possible." Anthony Wayne had been an assiduous student of the most admired military authors; but he now was to have a lesson from a master who taught him more in a single night than he had learned from Marshal Saxe's

<sup>1</sup> On the day after the battle, Sir William Howe informed Washington that every possible attention had been paid to the wounded Americans, and requested him to send some surgeons in aid of the British regimental doctors, whose hands were very full. Among the Continental officers wounded at Brandywine was a brave New Jersey colonel, who weighed three hundred and twenty pounds; and who some years afterwards was obliged to leave the army because no horse could carry him faster than at a walk.

*Réveries*, or Cæsar's Commentaries, in the course of half a lifetime. The best officer in Howe's army, short of Cornwallis, was Charles Grey, who died Earl Grey of Howick in Northumberland, and who was the father of the celebrated Whig prime-minister. It once was the fashion in America to write about General Grey as if he was of a pair with Governor Tryon; but, in truth, he was a high-minded and honourable gentleman, and a soldier every inch of him. He had been on Prince Ferdinand's staff in Germany; was wounded at Minden; and afterwards, like a good comrade, went back to his regiment, and was wounded again at Kloster Kampen. In that memorable *camisado* Grey learned by personal experience the important truth that, in a night attack, the less noise made the better. Wayne, who intended to take Howe unawares, had used every precaution to conceal his movements; but the people of the district were mostly Tories, and Sir William had soon been told all about him. Wayne's troops were encamped around the Paoli tavern, on or near a farm which, by a curious coincidence, had been his own father's property. The night of the twentieth September was dark and wet; and the Republican infantry had been specially enjoined to take off their coats, and fold them round their cartridge boxes in order to save their ammunition from damage.<sup>1</sup>

General Grey, on his part, would have nothing to do with cartridges. His soldiers were forbidden to load; and the flints were knocked out from any muskets which had been loaded already. The Royal troops, in order to prevent an alarm being given, led along with them in custody all the inhabitants whom they encountered on the road. It was as complete a surprise, and as utter a rout, as ever occurred in modern warfare. The British ran cheering in among the watch-fires, and fell on with sword and bayonet. Wayne induced some of his men to stand long enough

<sup>1</sup> Extract from Wayne's defence before a General Court Martial.

to let off a couple of volleys. He succeeded in carrying away his artillery, and consoled himself by imagining that he had inflicted serious loss upon the assailants; but it amounted to very little, for there were precisely a dozen casualties in the English ranks. Three hundred of the Americans were killed or wounded, and about thirty were captured unhurt. The affair has often been called, unfairly and almost absurdly, the Massacre of Paoli. Men always attach the idea of cruelty to modes of warfare in which they themselves are not proficient; and Americans liked the bayonet as little as Englishmen approved of taking deliberate aim at individual officers. It was currently reported throughout the Confederacy that quarter had been refused, and that the wounded were stabbed where they lay; but there is no arguing against figures. When the neighbouring farmers assembled next morning to bury their fallen countrymen, they found only fifty-three dead bodies. And yet the slaughter of that night was to Anthony Wayne a mournful, a salutary, and an abiding memory. Very many years afterwards, on the eve of a great Indian war, — when he was the most famous American general who still wore a sword for use, — he spoke with regret about the tragical necessity of calling from their homes a multitude of young men in order to instruct them in "the dreadful trade of death."<sup>1</sup>

This second American reverse settled the fate of Philadelphia. At gun-fire on the evening of the twenty-second September Sir William Howe issued orders that his troops should be under arms by the rising of the moon; and, just after midnight, they set

<sup>1</sup> General Anthony Wayne to Captain William Hayman; Legionville, 28 December, 1792.

Charges of inhumanity on the part of the Royal troops at Paoli are supported, in some histories, by quotations from a brutal, and indeed disgusting, letter purporting to be written by a Hessian sergeant. It is possible that such a document may be in existence; but there were no Hessians in General Grey's column, and the letter has the air of a forgery. In time of war, productions of that class are frequently inserted in the newspapers by foolish and ill-conditioned people; and they were unusually plentiful during the American contest.

forth upon their march to the nearest fords. Before dawn the fighting men were across the water; and at three in the afternoon the entire British army was planted, with all its artillery and all its baggage-carts, on the northern bank of the Schuylkill River, between General Washington and the city which he had been powerless to protect.

It was a fearful moment for those of the townspeople who had committed themselves to the support of the Revolution; and even convinced and conscientious Tories could not view without some trepidation the approach of so many thousands of expensive and exacting guests. Contemporary letters give a vivid picture of the dismay which prevailed almost universally among the citizens when the cannonade at Brandywine Creek was distinctly heard in the Southern Suburbs of Philadelphia, and when the town-crier warned all householders to close their shutters, and called upon every man who could carry a gun to appear at the muster on the Commons. "Gracious God," (wrote one poor woman,) "look down upon us, and send help from above! Every face you see looks wild and pale with fear and amazement, and quite overwhelmed with distress." The highways which ran North and East were soon thronged with Whig fugitives. Congress, ashamed of its hasty, and altogether unnecessary, flight to Baltimore in the previous December, behaved with coolness and self-possession in presence of this much more alarming crisis. The British and German prisoners of war, the Government archives, and the more portable of the national stores, were conveyed betimes to distant places of security; and all the militiamen of Pennsylvania were directed to hold themselves in readiness to march at an hour's notice. And then, — having entrusted Washington with full powers to promote or remove officers, and to make requisitions of food and clothing for the use of his soldiers, during a period of sixty days, and within a circumference of seventy miles around his own head-

quarters, — Congress adjourned first to Lancaster, and afterwards still farther west to York. There, all through the winter, a quorum of members continued to legislate, to administrate, and, (with still greater zest,) to wrangle and intrigue, as busily and intently as if they had not an enemy nearer at hand than Quebec. The familiar names of York and Lancaster, Reading and Chester, Bristol, Newcastle, and Derby, make the story of this campaign read like an invasion of England. The whole nomenclature of the district bore witness to a happier past, when a romantic and spontaneous affection for the mother-country pervaded that colony which now was the home of rebellion and the theatre of war.

On Friday the twenty-sixth September the British army entered Philadelphia by the Germantown Road, and marched, in sober triumph, into and through the heart of the city. The vanguard was commanded by Lord Cornwallis, who then and always, — in many quarters of the world, and under circumstances of extreme temptation, — never failed to display a humanity and a generosity worthy of the great nation to which he and his soldiers belonged. The regimental colours remained in their cases; but the bands struck up the tune of "God Save the King" amidst the acclamations of several thousand inhabitants, who, (as an English officer observed,) were mostly women and children.<sup>1</sup> Some of the latter, many years afterwards, wrote down their youthful impressions of the scene. They all agreed in testifying that the discipline of the Royal troops was exemplary, and their conduct irreproachable. Men occasionally dropped out of the line, and asked for milk or cider; but, in the case of houses where these applications became too frequent, a sentinel was stationed at the door, and relieved hour by hour until the whole army had filed past. One gentleman, who in 1777 was only ten years old, never forgot the "tranquil look and dignified appearance" of the English infantry.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Captain John Montrésor, Chief Engineer of the British army.*



"I went up," he wrote, "to the front rank of the Grenadiers when they had entered Second Street. Several of them addressed me thus:—'How do you do, young one?'" 'How are you, my boy?'—in a brotherly tone that seems still to vibrate on my ear. The Hessians followed in the rear of the Grenadiers. Their looks to me were terrific,—their brass caps, their mustachios, their countenances by nature morose, and their music that sounded, in better English than they themselves could speak, 'Plunder! Plunder! Plunder!'" Some of the older spectators, and especially the women, could not avoid comparing that brilliant and martial procession with the destitute and dilapidated army which, trying hard to look its best, had traversed the same line of streets a few weeks before. The British, (said a Whig lady,) were clean and healthy, and well-clad; and the contrast between them, and General Washington's poor bare-footed and ragged troops, was most startling, and aroused a feeling very near akin to positive despair.<sup>1</sup>

Outside Philadelphia despair was not the prevailing emotion among partisans of the Revolution. The capture of that city in December 1776, or even as late as April 1777, would have gone far towards damping, and perhaps extinguishing, the rebellion. In the spring, (said a well-informed Loyalist,) General Howe might have done anything; but he had now given the insurgents leisure to collect their whole strength.<sup>2</sup> Ever since Trenton their courage had been mounting; and they had recovered that habit of indomitable self-satisfaction which, in times of national peril and difficulty, has always been among the most valuable moral assets of the American people. Their Republic had no longer

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Mrs. Stedman to Mrs. Ferguson. *Recollections by John Ashmead of Germantown. Reminiscences of Captain J. C.*, quoted in the Sixth Volume of the *Pennsylvanian Magazine. The Camp on the Neshaminy*; page 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Diary of James Allen, of Philadelphia, Counsellor at Law.*

anything to fear in the northern quarter, where Burgoyne was already entangled within the toils; and Washington's soldiers, with the unconscionable optimism of their race, had begun to doubt whether they really and truly were defeated at Brandywine. They stoutly maintained that they had not been out-fought, although they had been out-numbered, and possibly out-generalled; and, while faith in their leader was for the moment somewhat shaken, they continued heartily to believe in themselves. This view of the matter was encouraged by Washington, who had proved in a very recent instance that he was not avaricious of his own reputation if he could in any way promote the public advantage by sacrificing a portion of it. The politicians at Philadelphia, thinking that a battle ought not to be lost without somebody being punished for it, had voted to recall Sullivan from the army in order to stand his trial for misconduct in the field. Washington at once came manfully forward in defence of his lieutenant. He told Congress that, so long as Lincoln and Arnold were absent, he was very short of good Major Generals; and that he could not afford to lose the services of a brave and loyal officer, who had done nothing at Brandywine except in obedience to his own express orders. Washington was all the more careful not to hurt the self-respect of his generals, or repress the enthusiasm of his rank and file, because he was very weak in numbers. His militia, hastily scraped together from States which had long ago sent into the regular army all the most martial elements in their population, could not be trusted to face the British muskets; and of Continental infantry he had barely eight thousand. The official returns of the Royal army, in the same week, showed sixteen thousand men "fit for duty;" which in their case was no routine phrase, for every one of Sir William Howe's regiments was qualified to play its part in all the emergencies of war. But Washington,—except under circumstances where audacity would have been sheer madness,—was always a fighting

general; and he now resolved to take his people while they were in the humour, and, whether few or many, to give them one more chance of trying their mettle against the invader.

The access to Philadelphia from the northwest lay through the main street of Germantown. That community, (as the name implies,) had been founded towards the close of the seventeenth century by Anabaptist emigrants of Teutonic origin whose theological creed was too abnormal, and too sincerely held, to be tolerated in Europe; and who accordingly sought and found, under the broad-minded rule of William Penn, the religious, the political, and the commercial freedom denied them on their native soil. "Most of the inhabitants," wrote a Swedish traveller in the year 1748, "are manufacturers, and make almost everything in such quantity and perfection that, in a short time, this province will want very little from England."<sup>1</sup> They exercised their craft in fresh air, and amidst cheerful surroundings. Germantown is now the favourite residential suburb of Philadelphia; and all the surviving monuments of its simple and artistic past are still held in high honour.<sup>2</sup> The dwellings, with their quaint gables and ponderous cornices, — "built of a stone which is mixed with glimmer, and roofed with shingles of white cedarwood," — were disposed well apart from each other in pretty gardens, with orchards and paddocks extending back into the adjoining country.<sup>3</sup> The straggling grass-bordered highway, which was called a street, measured two miles in length; and halfway down it stood, and stands, the house of Benjamin Chew, the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. He was a magistrate so popular, and so universally respected, that, when the war was over, his fellow-citizens pardoned his

<sup>1</sup> *Travels into North America*, by Peter Kalm, Professor of Economy in the University of Abo in Swedish Finland.

<sup>2</sup> *The Germantown Road and its Associations*, a collection of papers published in 1881 by Mr. Townsend Ward, is well worth reading. The illustrations are curious and attractive.

<sup>3</sup> Kalm's *Travels*.

Toryism, and appointed him once more to high judicial office. His stately and ever hospitable mansion, situated amidst smooth lawns and noble timber, was the perfection of domestic architecture; and its beautiful proportions have been reproduced on a medal issued as a badge of merit to an English regiment.<sup>1</sup> That house formed the central point of the position where, in the first week of October 1777, Sir William Howe arrayed his army with the object of covering the approach to Philadelphia. In and about the grounds was quartered the Fortieth Foot, under Colonel Musgrave, who had already done excellent service in the opening battles of the campaign, and who was soon to win a name which his countrymen, and still more his admiring adversaries, have taken good care shall not be forgotten. A very strong corps of British infantry, — composed, according to the questionable fashion of that day, by withdrawing the light companies from ten or a dozen regiments, — was thrown forward a mile in advance of the Chew mansion. About as far in rear of the building, at a distance of something over five miles from the market-place of Philadelphia, the bulk of the British troops were encamped along a front of four thousand yards. If they had been Americans they would have intrenched themselves, as by instinct, within eight and forty hours; but the officers of our army, — where the Chief Engineer was a Captain, and nothing more, — regarded such precautions as unmilitary, and such labours as mechanical, and even plebeian. Sir William Howe himself objected on principle to field-works. He never, (he said,) favoured their construction “at the head of the line, when in force,” for fear of diminishing the self-reliance, and the well-founded self-esteem, of his soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> John Adams, like all prominent men of every American party, had sat at the Chief Justice's table. “We were shown into a grand entry and staircase, and into an elegant and most magnificent chamber until dinner. The furniture was all rich. . . . Wines most excellent and admirable. I drank Madeira at a great rate, and found no inconvenience.” *Adams's Diary* for September 1774.

On Friday the third October the Republicans bivouacked in Worcester Township, five miles east of Skippack Creek, and eighteen miles from the city of Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> At seven o'clock that evening their whole army set out for Germantown. Greene commanded on the left, and Sullivan on the right; while Lord Stirling followed in reserve. Each soldier carried forty cartridges, and provisions for three days; and every man and officer had a piece of white paper fastened in his hat. It was an operation on the plan of Trenton, — with the same leaders on the same flanks, a night-march of the same length, and the same expectation of catching the opponent at a disadvantage in the early morning. On the present occasion, however, Washington had a more vigilant and valiant enemy to deal with; and the numbers were against him, and the luck also. It was, moreover, impossible for ten thousand armed men, and the teams of forty field-pieces, to traverse unobserved a district which was largely hostile. Sir William Howe had been informed overnight that an unusual amount of bustle was visible in the American lines; and that, beyond all question, an important movement was afoot. He warned his generals to be on the alert, but he made no change in the arrangement of his troops; and, in point of fact, it is not easy to see how they could have been better posted.

The Americans pressed forward through the darkness silently and, (considering the nature of the country,) very expeditiously. Sullivan arrived first on the ground, and was quite ready to commence at dawn. But the dawn never appeared. The night had been frosty, and the chill air heavy with lowland vapours. Towards morning the whole country became enveloped in a dense fog, ruinous to the success of a combined attack made by several converging columns upon our skilfully embattled, and admirably disciplined, army.

<sup>1</sup> The places mentioned in this chapter are indicated in the map at the end of the volume.



Sullivan's people speedily came into collision with the Royal light infantry; killed their sentries; surprised their picket; and drove the whole battalion, strenuously resisting, a full mile to the rearward. There the retreating companies fell into line with the Fortieth Regiment, which was drawn up behind the fence of a spacious orchard where Colonel Musgrave had pitched his camp. Their volleys, delivered coolly and with visible effect, stopped the first rush of the Republican onset. An obstinate contest ensued, in which the combatants, — who never saw forty yards, and very seldom more than twenty yards, in front of them, — made shift to aim at the flashes of the musketry opposite. On the side of the Americans there was superiority of numbers, and no lack of courage; and, in something less than twenty minutes, as men reckon time in battle, the British line gave way. While they were retiring from the conflict our soldiers encountered the wrathful presence of Sir William Howe, who had hurried to the front, and who now found himself nearer than he anticipated, but not nearer than he liked, to the hostile muzzles. "For shame, Light Infantry!" he cried; "I never saw you retreat before. Form! Form! It is only a scouting-party." At this moment, to the intense satisfaction of those veterans whom the general was rebuking, the head of an American column loomed through the mist, and several pieces of cannon opened fire upon the group of horsemen who were standing with Sir William Howe under a large chestnut-tree. "I never," said an officer of the Fifty-second Regiment, "saw people enjoy a discharge of grape before; but we all felt pleased to hear the grape rattle about the Commander-in-Chief's ears after he had accused the battalion of having run away from a scouting-party."<sup>1</sup>

A portion of the Fortieth Regiment went off in safety; but Colonel Musgrave, with six weak companies, was entirely surrounded by the enemy. In the

<sup>1</sup> Letter quoted in the *History of the Fifty-second British Regiment* by General Hunter.

course of the Revolutionary War two of King George's armies, finding themselves in a hopeless strategical position, were reduced to capitulate after they had done everything which honour and patriotism could demand; but to surrender during the heat of an engagement, while his soldiers had any ammunition left in their pouches, was an idea which, at that period of our military history, was almost inconceivable to a British regimental officer. Musgrave, with infinite difficulty, got his men inside the Chief Justice's house. He posted some of them in the rooms below, with orders to bar the doors and shutters, and bayonet everyone who should attempt to enter; while the rest were stationed, with their guns loaded, at the windows of the two upper stories. A young Virginian lieutenant, preceded by a drummer beating a parley, summoned the garrison to lay down their arms. The poor lad approached waving a white handkerchief. In such a state of the atmosphere, however, one colour looked the same as another, and the messenger of peace was shot dead. Three American cannon were immediately run forward, and blew in the hall-door at the first discharge; but the English captain who commanded on the ground-floor, and who had barricaded the entry with a pile of furniture, sent up word to Musgrave that the soldiers above stairs might ply their muskets in full assurance that their comrades below stairs would do their duty.

The Republicans advanced to the attack with spirit and resolution. One officer had his horse killed under him within three yards of the house. Another, who got close beneath the wall with an armful of straw and a lighted torch, was mortally wounded by a shot fired upwards through the cellar-grating. The Chevalier de Plessis clambered over the sill of a window, and found himself, alone and unsupported, in the presence of a group of redcoats from whom he was glad to escape alive. He was the only man among the assailants who, on that day, saw the inside of the Chew

mansion. Colonel John Laurens, with fruitless daring, led a storming-party of New Jerseymen against the principal entrance. The marble statues and vases, which ornamented the Chief Justice's lawn, were chipped and starred by the English bullets; but nothing made of flesh and blood could remain erect on that bare plot of turf, and under that deadly shower. Washington would, from the very first, have done well to have neglected Musgrave, and continued his forward movement in the direction of Philadelphia. By this time a large portion of his army had got completely out of hand. The American infantry and artillery made a circle about the building, and scourged it with a tempest of round-shot, grape, and musketry. The roof was pierced, and all the glass and woodwork shattered; but General Knox's three-pounders could make no impression whatever upon the well-laid brick walls and the massive stone copings. The bombardment had, in one important respect, a decisive influence upon the result of the battle; for the roar of the guns exerted a fatal attraction over those American generals and colonels who were painfully and blindly groping their passage through the fog. Battalions, brigades, and in one case a whole division, came blundering up from right, and left, and rear; firing in the direction of the foe, and sometimes into the backs of their own friends; increasing the confusion, and perpetually adding to the noise. Before very long three thousand Republicans were clustered and intermingled around the British stronghold; and Musgrave's seven score musketeers, like the Guardsmen at Hougomont, performed the inestimable service of detaining and paralyzing, through the critical hours of a disputed day, a hostile force enormously out of proportion to their own scanty numbers.

Washington had no strength to spare; for the most difficult part of his work was still before him. No fewer than five brigades of Royal infantry, with plenty of cannon, were drawn up behind a long and narrow

lane which crossed the village street at right angles a mile farther down the road to Philadelphia. The whole centre of the American army was now a whirlpool of confusion, which drew into its vortex everything that came near it; but the troops on Greene's extreme left, and Wayne's division, which closed the line on Sullivan's right, pushed vigorously forward, and were very soon in contact with the enemy. The Republicans were successful at first; but after a while the tide of battle turned. Sullivan's people lost heart on a sudden; and they were not without their excuses. They had travelled through the night. They had been fighting hard for nearly three hours. They had fired away their ammunition. Their flank was unprotected. Their reserves stopped behind to help, or to hinder, the attack upon Musgrave's garrison; and the English brigade immediately opposite to them was commanded by General Charles Grey, who, — as Wayne now for the second time experienced, — was a very awkward man to run up against in the dark. The roar of the American batteries around the Chew mansion told upon the nerves of Sullivan's exhausted soldiers. A rumour arose, and spread, that they were being assailed in the rear by a hostile force; and, to the surprise of the officers who commanded them, they broke their ranks, and retired from the field in hurry and disarray.

The defeat and disappearance of the American right wing placed General Greene in a situation of extreme jeopardy. He was hotly engaged to the east of the village, where he drove back the troops whom he first encountered, and took from them more prisoners than he had the means of guarding. All his men were now inside the British lines, fifteen hundred paces ahead of the nearest body of their fellow-countrymen, and mixed up with their adversaries in close and deadly strife. Nothing could avert their capture or destruction unless their general, by a miracle of energy, contrived to extricate them from the battle and the mist. Greene, if he had time to think, must have

regarded the task as well nigh hopeless. His scope of vision was limited to the length of a pistol-shot; his aides-de-camp, on their jaded steeds, could not leap the garden walls, and orchard-fences, by which the outskirts of Germantown were everywhere intersected; and he was within a few minutes of having the whole British army upon his hands. Charles Grey, with the promptitude of a good soldier, got his three battalions firmly into grasp; changed front to the right; and, flanked or followed by the rest of Howe's left wing, swept down upon the houses and the enclosures amidst which the Americans were posted. Lord Cornwallis had been left in care of Philadelphia, within hearing of the cannon. His practised ear soon informed him that this was no mere affair of outposts; and he set out for Germantown with three battalions of English and Hessian grenadiers. They started at a run; they kept it up for most of the way; and, before the crisis arrived, they were already near the spot. The British infantry in Greene's front, who had given ground reluctantly, and sold it dearly, rallied once more to the charge, and stormed fiercely in. There was no flinching on either part. The American bullets flew straight, and the Tower bayonets were actively at work. An English general of brigade, and two English colonels, were struck down with mortal wounds.<sup>1</sup> The Ninth Continental Regiment, familiarly known as "the Tall Virginians," was surrounded and taken; but not until the devoted battalion had been reduced by shot and steel to the strength of a single company. Nathanael Greene, during that terrible half-hour, set an example of cool and homely valour which, for long afterwards, was the talk of the American camp-fires. One of his field-pieces had been dismounted, and might have been abandoned without

<sup>1</sup> The Fifth Fusiliers lost their colonel at Germantown. Captain Harris succeeded to the command, and soon afterwards, in a fight against the French, he made a very great name both for himself and for his regiment.



dishonour ; but Greene had handled heavier masses of iron in his father's anchor-yard ; and he soon got the cannon lifted on to a waggon, and carted to the rear. When, later in the retreat, there was an alarm of cavalry, and the less resolute men slunk off into the fog, the General ordered what remained of the escort to join hands, and step along in line behind the guns and so the straggling ceased, and the whole of his artillery was drawn away in safety.

When the fugitives from Sullivan's regiments streamed past the place where Washington was stationed, replying to his questions and expostulations by pointing at their empty cartridge-boxes, the American commander at once recognised that the fortune of war had definitely gone against him. Without a moment's hesitation he began his arrangements for retreat, and did not call a halt until his troops were once more back in the distant quarters from which they had issued at the same hour on the preceding evening. The skill of his dispositions was respectfully admired by those officers in the van of the pursuing army who had any knowledge of tactics ; and his Continental infantry showed so firm a countenance that the British dragoons refrained from charging. General Howe followed up his success languidly, and inflicted little or no damage upon the departing enemy. It was alleged in defence that his soldiers were very tired ; but they must have been fresh in comparison to the Americans, who had been marching all the previous night while the English were sound asleep.<sup>1</sup> The period which intervened between ten in the morning and dusk, on the fourth of October 1777, was for Sir

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant James MacMichael, of the Pennsylvanian Line, noted in his diary that he got back to the camp on Skippack Creek at nine in the evening. "I had," he wrote, "previously undergone many fatigues, but never any that had so much overdone me as this. Had it not been for the fear of being taken prisoner, I should have remained on the road all night. I had marched in twenty-four hours forty-five miles, and in that time fought four hours, during which we advanced so furiously through buckwheat fields that it was almost unspeakable fatigue."

William Howe a lost, — and, as fate willed it, a last, — opportunity. Washington saved all his cannon. Four hundred of his people had been taken prisoners, and six hundred killed or wounded. Fifty-three Americans lay dead on the lawn in front of the Chew mansion, and four across the door-steps; and the very great number of their officers who perished sword in hand in the course of those few hours was a remarkable testimony to the discriminating vigour with which the commissioned ranks of Washington's New Model army had been purged of all baser elements. Our troops had suffered almost as heavily as their opponents; and for weeks to come there were melancholy scenes in the churchyard of the village, and in the upper chambers of its pleasant and hospitable homes. The humanity of the victors, — as were sure to be the case where a Howe was in command, — manifested itself equally and impartially towards friends and foes; and the surgeons of the Medical College in Philadelphia were encouraged to exercise their then unsurpassed science and dexterity on behalf of the wounded men of both armies.<sup>1</sup> During that fierce struggle between kinsmen, the old fraternal feeling was not extinct in many gallant hearts. On the hundred and twenty-sixth anniversary of the battle the remains of two English officers of rank were re-interred, at the cost of our own Government, near the spot where they had fallen; but those brave men had already rested peaceably for many years beneath a very brief and simple, — and, for that reason, perfect, — epitaph which had been placed on their gravestone by the native inhabitants of Germantown.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "I went to see Doctor Foulke amputate an American soldier's leg, which he completed in twenty minutes, while the physician at the Military Hospital was forty minutes performing an operation of the same nature." *Diary of Robert Morton; kept in Philadelphia while that City was occupied by the British Army.*

<sup>2</sup> "No more at War.

General Agnew and Colonel Bird :  
British officers,  
Wounded at the Battle of Germantown."

Washington, cruelly disappointed, complained in a private letter to his brother that his own troops, when they were just on the point of obtaining a decisive triumph, had taken fright, and fled with precipitation and disorder. But Germantown, none the less, was of great and enduring service to the American cause. That the battle had been fought unsuccessfully was of small importance when weighed against the fact that it had been fought at all. Eminent generals, and statesmen of sagacity, in every European Court were profoundly impressed by learning that a new army, raised within the year, and undaunted by a series of recent disasters, had assailed a victorious enemy in his own quarters, and had only been repulsed after a sharp and dubious conflict. An historian of note has truly said that the French Government, in making up its mind on the question whether the Americans would prove to be efficient allies, was influenced almost as much by the battle of Germantown as by the surrender of Burgoyne.<sup>1</sup> Frederic the Great had at first regarded the capture of Philadelphia by Sir William Howe as equivalent to the suppression of the rebellion.<sup>2</sup> He himself, in the course of the Seven Years' War, had twice seen Berlin in the occupation of an invading foe, without slackening his efforts, or surrendering himself to discouragement and despair; but he could not be expected to believe, without proof given, that the American general, and the American nation, possessed tenacity as indomitable, and energy as unquenchable, as his own. When, however, the news of Germantown reached Potsdam, the Prussian King, with a flash of insight which revealed to him the military and political situation beyond the Atlantic, pronounced that such a people, under such a leader, would survive even greater trials and mischances than the temporary loss of their capital city.

Congress, in manly terms, voted their thanks to General Washington and his soldiers: acknowledging

<sup>1</sup> Fiske's *American Revolution*; Chapter 7.

<sup>2</sup> Le Roi Frédéric à Monsieur de Goltz; Potsdam, 13 Novembre, 1777.

that the best designs, and the boldest efforts, might sometimes fail by unforeseen accidents; and expressing an earnest belief that the valour and virtue of the army would thereafter, by the blessing of Heaven, be crowned with deserved success.<sup>1</sup> That belief most undoubtedly was held by the army itself. Anthony Wayne, who had been defeated three times in as many weeks,—and who, on this third occasion, had been bruised by a cannon-ball, grazed by a bullet, and rolled on the ground under his dying horse within a few paces of the English bayonets,—assured his wife that he had had a glorious day at Germantown, and that his men were in the highest spirits, looking forward eagerly to another battle. Those irrepressible, if not altogether invincible, warriors banished from their memories the calamitous issue, and dwelt with just pride upon the honourable incidents, of the combat.<sup>2</sup> Nor were these sentiments confined to their own breasts. An increased respect for the prowess of American soldiers, and for the enterprise of American generals, prevailed among the adversaries with whom they had been contending; and the battle of Germantown affords a striking instance of the advantage which, in the long run, almost invariably rewards the strategist who combats evil fortune by assuming a vigorous offensive. From that day forward, during all the remaining years

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of Congress*; October 8th, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> "This action convinced our people that, when they attacked, they can confuse and rout the flower of the British Army." Israel Putnam to Governor Trumbull; Fishkill, October 15, 1777.

There was something almost comic in the persuasion of the individual American soldier that he, and his own regiment, would have done wonders at Germantown, if others had not failed in their duty. That view is recorded by an honest Pennsylvanian subaltern in a passage of not very Homeric verse.

"I then said, I had seen another battle o'er,  
And it had exceeded all I ever saw before.  
Yet through the danger I escaped without receiving harm,  
And providentially got safe through firing that was warm.  
But to my grief, though I fought sore, yet we had to retreat  
Because the cowardice of those on our left was great."

of the protracted war, Washington, and the army which he personally commanded, were never again seriously attacked by the enemy.

A couple of months after the battle of Germantown Horace Walpole informed a correspondent that tidings of two victories had arrived in London, and that the King had been "restored to the sovereignty of Philadelphia." Even that modest estimate was as yet beyond the mark. Sir William Howe was inside the city, and Washington had failed to turn him out of it by force; but a great deal had still to be done before the Royal general could hold his conquest in perpetuity. What with soldiers, teamsters, and camp followers, he had brought in his train more than twenty thousand mouths which would have to be abundantly and regularly filled if his army was to continue efficient; and he found in Philadelphia at least as many private persons of all ages, and both sexes, who could not be allowed to starve. The town had not been victualled for a siege. Like other centres of commerce and manufacture it had been fed, from week to week, and from day to day, by an automatic and complicated machinery which ran smoothly and silently in time of peace, but which broke down when the neighbourhood was infested by contending armies. It is true that Pennsylvanian agriculturists who, as a class, had little love for the Revolution, would, in most cases, have been glad enough to sell their produce to the English Commissariat officers at war prices; and, where the American farmers refused to trade, the Hessian foragers would have been very ready to take. But Washington had planted himself, close at hand, on Pennsylvanian soil. His main army was so judiciously posted, and his detached parties showed themselves so active and ubiquitous, that the British at Philadelphia were debarred from the resources of the fertile region west of the Delaware, and were reduced to draw their



rations from the Government magazines in New York city. Their only line of supply by land was on the east side of the river, across the northern districts of New Jersey; and the conduct of George the Third's foreign mercenaries, during the previous December, had changed the Jerseymen from half-hearted Loyalists, or very mild Whigs, into something which resembled a community of guerillas. They were guerillas of an Anglo-Saxon type,—not cruel or ferocious, but so vigilant and indefatigable, and so smart and handy in their operations, that it would be necessary for Sir William Howe to employ half his army in protecting his communications, if his provision-waggon were to pass, unburned and unplundered, over the hundred miles of highway which lay between the Bay of New York and the town of Philadelphia. It was already evident that the British soldiers, and the civil population amidst which they were quartered, would have to be fed by water-carriage; and the passage down the Delaware, from the city to the open sea, had long ago been providently, industriously, and on the whole not unskilfully, blocked by the exertions of the Republican authorities.

For a considerable distance south of Philadelphia the river was thickly studded with islands, great and small; and it was easy for the American engineers to obstruct navigation by those elaborate barriers which it pleased their fancy to entitle *chevaux de frise*, and by the more effective impediment of forts and batteries. Twelve miles down-stream the main channel was filled with "transverse beams, firmly united, pointing in various directions, and strongly headed with iron;"<sup>1</sup> and this portentous conglomeration of wood and metal was flanked by the guns of a large intrenchment, erected upon a bluff overlooking the town of Billingsport on the eastern shore of the Delaware. On a low island, a few miles farther up the river, stood a group

<sup>1</sup> "History of Europe" in the *Annual Register* for 1777; Chapter 7.

of block-houses enclosed in a parapet, and dignified by the name of Fort Mifflin; immediately opposite, at Red Bank on the Jersey shore, was a well-placed and carefully planned redoubt called after General Mercer, the Virginian who had been killed at Princeton; and the course of the current, between and below the two fortresses, had been barricaded by an invisible framework of sunken timber and scuttled barges. In addition to the stationary batteries, and to these hidden dangers which lurked beneath the waters, there was a fine frigate named the Delaware, and a numerous flotilla of schooners, fire-ships, floating batteries, galleys, gondolas, and xebecques. The vessels were classed under fantastic designations, and christened after a variety of ancient and contemporary naval heroes; but they were badly manned and worse commanded. Among their crews were many landsmen, who had been exempted even from the training which, as time went on, might have converted them into sailors. The streets of Philadelphia had been placarded during the preceding winter by a recruiting notice of unique and unprecedented character. Gentlemen who desired to assist their country in the struggle for liberty, but who might not choose to be far removed from their parents or family, were invited to evince their patriotism, "and at the same time to gratify their tender feelings," by entering themselves for service in the New Floating Battery. On board this comfortable and well-protected hulk, — which, (so the Government promised,) should never be stationed more than seven miles away from their native city, — those of them who were handicraftsmen might pursue their arts in peace, while they enjoyed a stipend of fifty shillings a month, together with an allowance of ten pounds of meat a week, and a pint of rum every two days. The advertisement bore signs of having been drawn up either by Benjamin Franklin before he sailed for France, or by some constant reader of the Gazette, and the Almanac, who had caught Franklin's style; but the sort of mariners whom such a prospectus

would attract were not very likely to hold their own in the day of battle against an equal number of Lord Howe's able seamen.<sup>1</sup>

The situation was embarrassing; but Sir William Howe had already begun to deal with it. On the evening of the day that our army took possession of Philadelphia Lord Cornwallis planted three batteries of heavy cannon along the river front of the city. Early next morning the larger American vessels anchored off the wharf at a respectful distance, and commenced bombarding; but the British howitzers replied, and had much the best of the controversy. The Delaware frigate was deplorably handled in the action; and it soon became evident that her officers had not so much as acquainted themselves with the soundings of the river after which their ship was called. When the tide fell she was left aground. She was abandoned by her consorts. She caught fire in two places. Her captain meekly complied with a summons to come on shore as a prisoner. Her crew escaped in the boats; and their vacant places were taken by a boarding-party of Royal Marines, who extinguished the flames, and got her broad-sides once more into working order. The British army, unaided by a single man-of-war, had inflicted upon the Republican squadron a blow from the moral effect of which it never recovered. Five days afterwards a detachment of Howe's infantry took possession of Billingsport, and the English frigates from below the barrier cleared a passage through the *chevaux de frise*. The American flotilla made a

<sup>1</sup> "Those who are thus inclined to serve themselves, their country, and posterity, let them repair to the Sign of the Two Tuns, opposite the New Market, where they shall have a month's pay in advance, and a dollar, or a dollar's worth of drink, to drown sorrow, and drive away care. The battery is well constructed for the preservation and accommodation of her men. Any industrious tradesman, whose business is of a sedentary nature, may here have his house-rent, firing, victuals, and drink, free; besides his pay, and a great deal of time in which he may employ himself for the emolument of his family, (should he have one,) or fill his pockets for his own amusement." *American Archives* for October 1776.

show of interrupting the operation. But the Andrea Doria and the Benedict Arnold, opening fire at long range, and desisting as soon as the British advanced towards closer quarters, behaved in a manner very unworthy of their names; whilst disheartenment, in the case of more than one ship's-company, did not stop short of defection from the Republican cause. Washington, in sad and stately phrases, lamented that the officers and seamen on board the galleys had manifested a disposition which reflected little honour upon their courage and fidelity. Two complete crews, (he said,) had actually deserted to the adversary.

It was a sorry, but by many centuries not a new, story. Among a people engaged in a wrestle for national existence, and making head against unaccustomed dangers by means of raw levies and improvised military appliances, — panic and indiscipline have, in all ages, alternated with world-renowned manifestations of valour and devotion. Nor can it be denied that the high character of American patriotism was handsomely vindicated before the contest for the Delaware had been brought to a conclusion. When, on the thirteenth September 1777, the news of victory on the Brandywine reached Lord Howe's flag-ship in the Elk River, the British admiral took instant measures for transferring his powerful fleet, and his vast convoy, to those distant waters where the fate of the campaign was now about to be decided. He retraced the whole of his long and useless voyage, making his way down the estuary of the Chesapeake at the rate of five leagues in the twenty-four hours, and then tacking, slowly and painfully, up the stretch of sea-coast which extended from the Capes of Virginia to the entrance of Delaware Bay. The winds were adverse and tempestuous; but, by dint of sturdy seamanship, Lord Howe's leading division came to anchor off the town of Chester, just fifteen miles below Philadelphia, on the fourth day of October. Another week elapsed before the rest, but not quite all the rest, of his storm-tossed vessels straggled home into smooth

water from their conflict with the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>1</sup> The British fleet and the British army were now once more in touch; and the brothers Howe, after no undue delay, contrived their plan for a conjoint attack upon the formidable stronghold of Fort Mercer. The Admiral undertook to distract and annoy the garrison by cannonading the river-face of the American defences, while in the landward quarter an assault was to be pushed home by an officer who petitioned for that arduous employment as a personal favour to himself. Ever since the disaster of Trenton, Colonel Von Donop had been urgent for an opportunity to re-establish the military credit of his German comrades; and Sir William Howe, who loved a man of spirit, willingly acceded to his request. Von Donop took with him three battalions of Grenadiers, and a very strong regiment of ordinary infantry; Hessians all, two thousand bayonets by count.<sup>2</sup> They were ferried across from Philadelphia on the twenty-first October, and halted at night in the village of Haddonfield on the Jersey shore, ten miles north-west of the fortress which they were to assail on the morrow.

The place was held by three hundred infantry from Rhode Island, trained in Nathanael Greene's methods; animated by his spirit; and commanded by his kinsman and military pupil,—an officer whose reputation has been established, beyond the possibility of detraction, by the events of a single afternoon. Colonel Christopher Greene had come to the conclusion that the circuit of the works was too extensive to be properly manned by his handful of musketeers. Advised and assisted by the Chevalier Mauduit de Plessis,—a young

<sup>1</sup> A fine transport, which Lord Howe had re-named "The Father's Good Will" with the idea of re-assuring and conciliating King George's misguided subjects, foundered and sank under stress of weather. It was a sinister, and all too veracious, omen.

<sup>2</sup> On the rolls of the army which embarked at New York in July 1777 the three Grenadier battalions averaged four hundred and thirty bayonets apiece; the Mirbach Regiment numbered more than seven hundred rank and file; and each company of chasseurs must have had a strength of at least fifty rifles.



Frenchman of family who had volunteered to serve in Fort Mercer, and who there united in his own person the functions of Chief Engineer and Commandant of Artillery, — he abandoned and dismantled the outer line of defences, and bestowed all his attention on a small pentagonal redoubt which occupied the centre of the position. The ditch surrounding this little citadel had in front of it a barricade of felled trees with interwoven branches; while behind it was a bank of earth, ten feet high, and faced with planking. Late in the evening of the twenty-first October a detachment of Pennsylvanian militia, equal in number to the whole of Christopher Greene's troops, looked in on their way to Fort Mifflin, whither they had been despatched by General Washington as a reinforcement for the garrison stationed on the island. Their colonel earnestly begged that he and his people might be permitted to cast in their lot with the defenders of Fort Mercer; but, after sleeping on the question, Christopher Greene declined to interfere with the plans of the Commander-in-Chief, and sent the Pennsylvanians off to their destination at break of day.

About four o'clock in the afternoon the enemy came in sight, and took up their alignment in front of the woods, a quarter of a mile to the northward. Two of Von Donop's staff officers advanced as near the fortifications as they were allowed to approach; summoned the King of England's rebellious subjects to lay down their arms; and warned them that, "if they stood the battle, no quarter whatever would be given." The Americans listened to the message with surprise and indignation. For the war had hitherto been conducted, as between Englishmen, with reasonable humanity, and not infrequent displays of rough but genuine good nature; and the Rhode Island farmers did not relish this taste of bloodthirsty rhetoric inspired by the worst military traditions of Continental Europe. To the imagination of a quiet-mannered people the very gestures of Von Donop's envoys seemed insolent, and their countenances cruel and haughty. As soon

as the parley was at an end Von Donop assembled his colonels, and addressed them in stirring language. In obedience to his own example they all dismounted, unsheathed their swords, and placed themselves in front of their respective battalions; while the Hessian Grenadiers cheered like mad, and called out that Fort Mercer should soon be re-named "Fort Donop." Christopher Greene, who had been watching the foe through a spy-glass from the summit of the parapet, descended from his post of observation, and walked down the line with one last word of counsel to each of his followers. "Fire low, my men;" he said. "They have a broad belt just above the hips. That is where you must aim."

Historians have reported, or invented, longer speeches made on the eve of battle by more renowned generals; but the American leader had said exactly what the occasion needed. Over and above the intrinsic importance of the advice, he had given his soldiers, at the critical moment of the fight, something else to think about besides their own personal danger. At a quarter before five in the evening the Hessian artillery began to play; and their infantry came on like a broad torrent, three regiments in front, and the fourth in reserve. They rushed over the exterior breastworks, which were bare of men, in full belief that the terror of their charge had sent the garrison flying to the rear; and, without waiting to look around them, they advanced at a run upon the inner fort, — still in good order, (for they were drilled to perfection,) waving their hats, and shouting victory. In another minute they were entangled among the impediments which obstructed the glacis; and then at last the New England muskets spoke. It may well be doubted whether so few men, in so small a space of time, had ever delivered a deadlier fire. Three German colonels went down, and a score of other officers; and their soldiers fell in heaps. The boldest of them pushed their way across the ditch; but they had no scaling-ladders; and, encumbered by huge knapsacks and

ponderous trappings, they tried in vain to shoulder each other up and over the smooth wall. The Republican galleys, — propelled by oars, and drawing little water, — stood close in shore, and enfiladed the right wing of the assailants with grape and round-shot at very short ranges. In forty minutes all was over. The Hessians retired from the contest, pursued by rifle-balls up to the verge of the forest, and then marched continuously through the night until they once more reached their ferry on the eastern bank of the Delaware River.

The mortal character of the injuries inflicted bore witness to the accuracy with which Americans could shoot from behind cover. So far as the war north of the Potomac was concerned, it was a lesson that never required repeating. A hundred and twenty-seven Hessians lay dead in the trenches. The retreating column was accompanied by all the wounded who could bear to be carried, or helped along, by their comrades; and twenty-two of these poor fellows were buried by the road-side on the way back to Philadelphia. Sixty more were left on the ground disabled. Colonel Greene did his very utmost to preserve their lives. He had, however, few medicines, and no wholesome food whatever, to give them; and forty died in the course of the next month. Hundreds of homes were left desolate in Germany; but it was money in the Landgrave's pocket, inasmuch as he had stipulated for an extra payment of thirty crowns from the British Treasury for every one of his subjects who might be killed in action. Although the loss of the Americans had been small, they were too weak in number to venture upon liberties with the enemy, and they did not sally from the works until he had taken his final departure from their neighbourhood. Then they picked up three hundred excellent muskets, and captured a score of Hessians who had been waiting patiently between the ditch and the wall in preference to running the gauntlet of the bullets in an attempt to escape across the open. Colonel Von Donop was found,

with his thigh shattered, lying amidst the thick of the slain. He was treated, at Washington's particular instance, with all the respect and tenderness which his rank and his reputation demanded; but he only survived a week. A rude unsculptured stone marked his grave.<sup>1</sup> His monument was left blank from a difficulty which both friends and foes acknowledged to be insuperable. After the battle of Trenton a German subaltern had bethought himself of composing an epitaph for poor Colonel Rall; but he could not word it to his satisfaction. And no wonder; for an inscription on the tomb of the brave men who were sent to their death in America by the Landgrave of Hesse was not an easy epitaph to write.

That day was disastrous to our arms on water and on shore alike. Admiral Howe endeavoured to do his part loyally; and the sight of the cannon-smoke from the American galleys, as they spread slaughter through the ranks of our German auxiliaries, stimulated our sailors to rashness, and even to recklessness. A British ship of the line, and a cruiser carrying sixteen guns, grounded in the shallows, caught fire, and perished by the explosion of their magazines. The spirit of Sir William Howe's army was depressed by these unforeseen reverses; and worse news still remained to be unfolded. As far back as the eighteenth October, English officers had been puzzled and worried by a concerted discharge of artillery from all the American ships and batteries on the Delaware River. Something had evidently happened which pleased the adversary. Disagreeable rumours filtered through the Royal outposts; and, after the lapse of a fortnight, certainty came. On the third day of November Sir William Howe announced to the army in a General Order that Burgoyne had capitulated at Saratoga.

Such an extraordinary delay in the transmission of such important intelligence brought home to the apprehension of the British in Philadelphia a very painful

<sup>1</sup> Lossing's *Field-book*; Volume II., Chapter 3.

sense of their own isolation. The increasing scarcity of provisions, fuel, and warm clothing had already begun to teach them how completely they were cut off from the outer world. The approach of a Pennsylvanian winter was severely felt both by man and beast. The horses were in poor condition from cold weather, exhausted pastures, and a total lack of imported forage. The price of most articles essential to human existence was flying up at an alarming rate. Salt fetched sixteen shillings a bushel, and butter four shillings a pound. Very poor fresh meat was sold by the ounce, and each ounce cost twopence; while wheat-flour could not be purchased. These sums were reckoned in hard money; for the notes issued by Congress did not pass current inside the city; but luxuries might be smuggled through the lines by those who could afford to pay for them in Continental paper on the scale of four hundred dollars for a pound of green tea, and a thousand dollars for half a hundred-weight of loaf sugar. The soldier had a bad and insufficient ration; and there was much suffering among the townspeople. The Tories, who were very miserable, had become sullen and discontented; while citizens who favoured the Revolution were not so hungry as to refrain from feeling, and even expressing, keen satisfaction over this unexpected change in the military situation. Unless the provisions from New York could freely ascend the river, it would be impossible for Sir William Howe permanently to hold the town; and another month of semi-starvation would reduce the British garrison,—for it was already a garrison rather than a field-force,—to a condition which would make it difficult for him even to retreat with safety.<sup>1</sup>

The deliverance of our beleaguered countrymen from

<sup>1</sup> Captain Montrésor, Sir William Howe's Chief Engineer, made the following entry in his private notebook: "We are just now an army without provisions; a rum artillery for Besieging; scarce any ammunition; no clothing, nor any money. Somewhat dejected by Burgoyne's capitulation, and not elated with our late manœuvres, such as Donop's repulse, and the Augusta and Merlin being burnt; and, (to complete all,) blockaded."



these impending dangers was destined to be wrought, not by the hired valour of the foreigner, but by English energy and pertinacity exerted on that element where those national qualities have always been displayed to the best advantage. Lord Howe entertained friendly sentiments towards the Americans, and was heartily grieved that he ever had accepted a command against them under a mistaken impression of the part which he was commissioned by the Cabinet at home to play; but he had not the slightest intention of allowing them to snap their fingers at the Royal Navy, to blockade a British army, and to spoil his brother's campaign. Preparations for the siege of Fort Mifflin had already been commenced under circumstances of extreme difficulty. That redoubt was erected on an accumulation of vegetable soil washed down by the river, and complimented with the name of "Mud Island." It was protected from naval attack on the southern quarter by extensive tracts of alluvial deposit, of which nothing could be seen at high water except the tops of the reeds. On the western side a channel five hundred yards broad, but so shallow and shifting as to be accounted impassable for sailing-vessels, separated the fortress from certain low islands which fringed the Pennsylvanian shore. They were a mere net-work of marshes, the paradise of the duck-shooter; impervious for wheel-carriages; and rescued from inundation by dykes, large portions of which the Americans had been careful to destroy. On this unpromising scene of operations the British engineers had been working slowly, and rather hopelessly; but, after the repulse at Fort Mercer, they applied themselves anew to their task with the unsparing activity of people to whom time was very precious, and money no object.<sup>1</sup> Fatigue-parties of two hundred soldiers; large gangs of jovial sailors, glad to find themselves on any description of land, wet or dry, that went by the name of a shore; and skilled

<sup>1</sup> Ever since November began, Lord Howe had been sending large quantities of guineas up the river in boats, for the use of the British army.

workmen from the city paid at the rate of ten shillings for the twenty-four hours, — were employed all day and all night until the business was accomplished. The breaches in the embankments were repaired, and carefully guarded against any future attempts at mischief. Causeways were built across the swamp. Solid platforms for cannon were constructed at the river's edge; and the batteries were armed with howitzers and large mortars, and with a good store of thirty-two pounder guns borrowed from the lower tiers of Lord Howe's broadsides.

After three weeks of intense and continuous labour all was ready; and at dawn on the tenth November the bombardment commenced. Thundering across an interval of little more than two furlongs our artillery speedily dominated the fire of Fort Mifflin, and wrecked the whole enclosure. Blockhouses were reduced to heaps of rubbish, palisades shivered into splinters, and barracks so riddled by shot as to be entirely uninhabitable. Strong parties of American militia were fetched over at night to repair damages, and sent back again to the mainland before morning; for none except the best Continental regulars could be persuaded, or bribed, to remain during the hours of daylight in that place of torment.<sup>1</sup> The garrison was maintained, by constant reinforcements, at a strength of three hundred men; and in six days there occurred, within the circuit of the island, two hundred and fifty, — or, according to the British account, four hundred, — casualties. Several principal officers fell in quick succession; and their places were supplied, without

<sup>1</sup> Washington promised a hundred pounds to every soldier who would join the garrison at Fort Mifflin, and see the siege out.

Chance has preserved a scrap of conversation which passed in Fort Mifflin during the course of that week. Colonel Samuel Smith of Maryland, who was in command until his turn to be wounded came, noticed that one of his staff officers did not hold his head steady when the cannonballs flew over it. "What are you dodging for, Sir?" said the Colonel; "the King of Prussia had thirty aides-de-camp killed in one day." "Yes, Sir," (the young man replied;) "but Colonel Smith hasn't so many to lose."

regard to rotation or seniority, by volunteers who were willing to undertake a most trying service, and to face a horrible scene. The troops in the fort, who had a notable infusion of Virginians amongst them, lay ensconced behind the ruins with their muskets loaded, waiting and praying for an assault by storm which never came.

The British admiral, who was a judge of courage, perceived that the garrison would yield to nothing short of stronger measures, and more unusual modes of warfare, than had hitherto been adopted; and he determined to deal with Fort Mifflin as if it were the flag-ship of a French squadron. Refusing to give credit on hearsay to the evil reputation of the channel which skirted the Pennsylvanian shore, he ordered that section of the river to be surveyed by competent naval officers, and marked out with buoys. On the fifteenth November he brought his battle-ships into action to the south of Mud Island; while two of his captains, successfully threading the narrow and treacherous western passage, approached Fort Mifflin on the north until their yard-arms almost overhung the battlements, and raked the unfortunate island fore and aft. The Republican schooners and galleys, which might easily have overwhelmed that pair of bold intruders upon fenced and forbidden waters, held aloof from the combat; and the garrison, left to its own resources, possessed no means of resistance whatsoever. Hand-grenades were thrown into the fort from the tops of the two British vessels; and not a man could show himself on the platforms of the American batteries without being a mark for forty or fifty muskets. The cross-fire of heavy ordnance from sea and land was immense in volume, and appalling in effect. It was calculated that, in the course of twenty minutes, a thousand large projectiles came rushing in upon the defenders. Their few remaining cannon were almost immediately dismounted; four fifths of their artillerymen had by this time been struck down; and no angle

of wall, or bank of earth, could afford them protection against the storm of missiles which swept across their islet from every quarter of the compass. The survivors, who dreaded nothing so much as the loss of their personal liberty, endured till nightfall; and then, under veil of the darkness, they retired very deliberately across the eastern branch of the Delaware River, carrying with them their remnant of stores, and their large cargo of wounded. They made over to Lord Howe the blood-stained ruins, and the shattered cannon, as his prize of victory; having borne themselves like worthy antagonists of as fine a seaman as ever paced a British quarter-deck.<sup>1</sup>

Our admiral had wrenched the key of the Delaware from his adversary's grasp; and the door was soon flung wide open. On the nineteenth November Lord Cornwallis approached Fort Mercer at the head of ten battalions; and the Republicans, knowing him for a man who was not disposed to trifle, evacuated the place, and so spared him the trouble of a siege, or the hazard of an escalade. The score and a half vessels of the American flotilla lay in the stream beneath the fort, moored in a snug berth, and very little the worse for wear. Their captains had never ventured within point-blank range of a hostile man-of-war; their masts and spars were still intact; and they had lost fewer than forty killed and wounded in a naval campaign which had already continued more than forty days. But their hour had now come. The rowing-galleys escaped against the current to Burlington; but the sailing-ships did not care to face our batteries at Philadelphia, and were mortally afraid of the Delaware frigate, which had behaved to perfection ever since it was transferred

<sup>1</sup> Captain Mahan appears to regard the behaviour of the garrison at Fort Mifflin as a presage and a forewarning that their country would never be subdued. "That same night," he writes, "the Americans abandoned Fort Mifflin. Their loss, (Beatson says,) amounted to nearly four hundred killed and wounded; that of the British to forty-three. If this be correct, it should have established the invincibility of men who, under such prodigious disparity of suffering, could maintain their position so tenaciously."

to British hands. At four in the morning of the twenty-first November the American crews set themselves ashore on New Jersey, after putting fire to their own vessels. Sloops, brigs, and floating batteries, seventeen in all, drifted up-stream past the crowded wharves of the Pennsylvanian capital, with their rigging and sails blazing sky-high, their cannon going off as fast as the flames reached them, and their magazines exploding. Two hours afterwards the ebb-tide brought back again into view those of them which had not as yet been sunk or stranded; and the citizens of Philadelphia saw all that was to be seen of a pyrotechnic display for which they had paid a very full price, inasmuch as the Delaware fleet had stood the Republican taxpayer in half a million of pounds sterling. While one brother was gaining the mastery on the water, the other had been engaged in making the possession of his new conquest secure by land. A chain of fourteen redoubts, connected by a strong stockade, now covered a space of two and a half miles, extending from the Upper Ferry on the Schuylkill River to a point on the western shore of the Delaware above the town; and the Royal troops were disposed along this line of fortification with the skill and particularity which Sir William Howe always applied to the arrangement of military details. Before the winter set in, the river had become a free and uninterrupted highway for British traffic; while all the avenues leading into Philadelphia from the westward were inexorably closed to Washington.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE BRITISH IN PHILADELPHIA. VALLEY FORGE. THE WINTER OF DISCONTENT

FOR six whole months to come the war stood still. Sir William Howe abode in peace and comfort at Philadelphia; while Washington, in his cheerless quarters outside the city, found that he had more than enough to do in preserving his soldiers alive. But that half-year, during which all military operations of any consequence were entirely suspended, was marked by a series of occurrences and proceedings,—in both camps, in both countries, and on the Continent of Europe,—which had a potent influence upon the final issue of the American Revolution.

During the period that elapsed between the beginning of December 1777, and the middle of June 1778, the question whether Great Britain could conciliate, pacify, and permanently and smoothly govern America, was tried out in a limited and securely protected locality, under every condition which could be expected to ensure success. The eastern districts of Pennsylvania were a region signally favoured by nature, where agricultural industry was intelligently pursued, and lavishly remunerated, without any irksome demand for excessive labour or over-anxious parsimony. "I bless God," wrote a farmer who sailed from Greenock in 1771, "that I came here; and I heartily thank every man who encouraged me, and helped me to get the better of that fear which a man is under when he is to venture on so wide a sea." Two years after his arrival this good Scotchman was settled in a capacious house, standing on four hundred acres of his

own land, which he and his sons had cleared. In Renfrew and Lanark, (he said,) they always used to think it a great thing for the lairds that they possessed orchards; and now he himself had planted two hundred fruit-trees, and was already gathering apples; while cucumbers, pumpkins, and melons grew profusely in the open fields. His crops were heavy; and his flock and herd, and still more his drove of swine, increased fast. Good food was everywhere abundant; and yet, though the consumer had high times, the producer found no cause for complaint or despondency. "This," (so the writer went on to say,) "is the best poor man's country in the world; for the price of provision is cheap, and the price of labour is dear. But this country is chiefly profitable to those farmers who bring along with them one, two, or three hundred pounds. Such farmers can afford to eat good pork, beef, or mutton as often as those who pay one, two, or three hundred pounds of yearly rent in Scotland." <sup>1</sup> East Pennsylvania was full of the right sort of emigrants, who came to stay, who were not sparing of their own personal labour, and who did their full duty by the land which afforded them a comfortable home, — and, in the case of many German refugees, a much-needed asylum. The Dutch farmers, (we are told,) employed between eight and nine thousand waggons in bringing their produce to Philadelphia. "As they gathered in hundreds along Market Street, with their six and eight mammoth horses, surmounted by bells, they presented a scene to be found nowhere else on earth, unless, indeed, the assemblage of some vast caravan in Asia might be likened thereto." <sup>2</sup>

The householders in the counties of eastern Pennsylvania had no relish for war, and little inclination towards rebellion. The Germans, indeed, (ill as some of them could pronounce the word,) were Whigs almost

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Alexander Thomson, of Franklin County, Pennsylvania; in the year 1773.

<sup>2</sup> *A Walk to Darby*; by Townsend Ward.

to a man;<sup>1</sup> but Tory sentiments prevailed among the English-speaking residents in large villages, and the occupiers of extensive farms. Their loyalty was not demonstrative, and in respect of devotion and self-sacrifice it fell very far short of the standard set forth in the Marquis of Montrose's little poem;<sup>2</sup> but they had enough of it to make Washington's existence a burden to him as long as King George's army remained in their neighbourhood. They gave Sir William Howe a good deal of valuable military information gratis; and they sold him the pick of their stables at long prices, — a traffic which the American Commander-in-Chief, who had a Virginian's susceptibility in any case where the ownership of a fine horse was concerned, endeavoured to repress by the exercise of what, for him, was unusual severity. Above all, they shirked service in the local Republican militia; they offered as much as fifty guineas to anyone who would enlist in their stead; and, if they could not provide themselves with a substitute, they stopped at home whenever their regiment was called into the field, and persuaded their friends and dependents to follow their example. Washington ruefully contrasted his own very poor show of Pennsylvanians with the eager throng of New Englanders and New Yorkers who had rallied to the defence of the Republic at Saratoga. Fourteen thousand men, (he wrote,) were actually in General Gates's camp; — the best yeomanry in the land, well armed with their own private weapons, and supplied with provisions of their own carrying. "How different," the General exclaimed, "is our case! The disaffection of a great

<sup>1</sup> "Of the nineteen members of the Pennsylvania Assembly, who voted against the submission of the Constitution to a vote of the people, not one was a German; and of the forty-three who voted in favour of it, twelve were Germans." *The Pennsylvania Dutchman, and wherein he has excelled*; by the Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, LL.D.

<sup>2</sup> "He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who dares not put it to the touch  
And win, or lose, it all."

part of the inhabitants of this State, the languor of others, and the internal distraction of the whole, have been among the great and insuperable difficulties which I have met with, and have contributed not a little to my embarrassments in this campaign."<sup>1</sup>

Philadelphia closely resembled the province of which it was the capital in material opulence, in amenity of aspect, and in the political complexion of its inhabitants. Already large enough to be a centre of accumulated wealth, and high civilisation, it had not as yet outgrown the spacious and convenient site which had been discovered for it by the unerring judgment of its founder. Travellers from Europe, where a town was often a tortuous maze of dwellings crowded within the narrow limits of an ancient rampart, admired the straight and uniform thoroughfares, sixty or a hundred feet broad, which crossed each other at right angles in William Penn's city. Well paved, adequately lighted, scrupulously clean,—and completely, though very economically, equipped with educational, scientific, social, medical, and charitable institutions,—Philadelphia bore visible witness, in all its corners, to the touch of Benjamin Franklin, the most effective, and undoubtedly the most rational and unpretentious, municipal reformer that the world has ever seen. A beautiful feature was the girdle of foliage which encircled the body of the place beyond the point where the interior streets began to lose themselves in the rural suburbs. One main approach to the town ran in spring-time through a continuous mile of peach-blossoms. The residences of the leading merchants stood amidst gardens and deer-parks, and avenues of fine trees which the owner pleased himself by thinking that William Penn had planted. Within the houses everything was handsome and costly;—the libraries stored with subscription-copies of books from the

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Major General Armstrong, March 27, 1778; to Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, Nov. 13, 1777; to Landon Carter, October 27, 1777.

most celebrated presses of France and England; the Gobelin tapestry of the sofas; the brocaded chairs; the blue and white tiles round the fire-places; and the full-length mirrors let into the folding-doors, which would have been much better away. The eating and drinking were the best, and the clothes the most expensive and fanciful, in America. Up to the eve of the Revolution many of the Quaker ladies had no distinctive costume; and, when they ceased to wear colours, the rich fabrics in which they still indulged formed a very imposing back-ground to brighter dresses. Philadelphian public Assemblies, with their abundance of exceedingly eligible partners, attracted dancers from all the Central Colonies; and famous dancing-masters came over from Europe, and thrived as they could not thrive at home. Half a generation before the Declaration of Independence forty chariots and landaus were already counted in the streets of Philadelphia. During the next fifteen years private equipages increased rapidly in number; and ornamental coach-building, which in those days was an art as well as a trade, obtained a place among the recognised industries of the town.<sup>1</sup>

The seeds of disaffection and revolt were slow to germinate in so rich a soil. John Adams, in one of his sweeping and rather savage generalisations, described Philadelphia as a mass of cowardice and Toryism.<sup>2</sup> The Quakers, who were anything rather than cowards, and who frequently showed more courage in refusing to fight than a good many noisy partisans on either side displayed in the hour of battle, had solemnly and officially declared themselves to be Followers of the Prince of Peace. So they announced at their yearly Meeting in the Fall of 1776; and subsequently to that date things had happened which were not of a nature

<sup>1</sup> Kalm's *Travels. Philadelphia, the Place and the People*, by Agnes Repplier. Extracts from the Day-books of Messrs. Quarrier and Hunter; between Seven and Eight Street, Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> *Adam's Diary*; September 18, 1777.



to reconcile them with the Revolution. The Fourth of July 1777 had been commemorated with every circumstance that they most disliked;—explosions of gunpowder all through the day; in the evening, a banquet with warlike toasts, and tickets of admission purchasable by Republican bank-notes in place of solid shillings; and, as soon as night arrived, a brisk smashing of Quaker windows. When the British army reached the Chesapeake, and Philadelphia became seriously threatened, Congress ordered the arrest and deportation of those influential citizens who would not profess allegiance to the New Constitution; and of twenty recusants no fewer than seventeen were Friends. They were removed from their pleasant houses, mildly remonstrating, and conveyed in waggons to Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley.<sup>1</sup> Here they were detained in a very liberal confinement, living in separate boarding houses of their own selection, making themselves generally liked in Virginian society, and indoctrinating all whom they met with their own distrust and detestation of the Continental paper-money. Two of them died in the course of the winter; and Congress grew ashamed of the treatment which had been inflicted upon these excellent and innocent persons. Washington, who understood their scruples and respected their character, exerted himself actively on their behalf; and early in April 1778 he had the satisfaction of passing them through his outposts, and forwarding them safely home to their families in Philadelphia. That is the story of the company of men whom the members of their body still honour

<sup>1</sup> Captain Graydon met the party of Friends on their road southwards. They had amongst them a man of the world to act as courier, in the person of a fencing-master who was a stout and honest Loyalist. "His red coat and laced hat were very strikingly in contrast with the flat brims and drab coloured garments of the rest of the assembly. Friend Pike, as he was called, officiating in the capacity of a major-domo, or caterer, at the inns they put up at, was a person, I found, of no small consequence with his party." *Memoirs of a Life Chiefly passed in Philadelphia*; Chapter 12.

under the title of the Virginian Exiles. Sharper persecutions have been chronicled in political, and still more in religious, history ; but it is hardly surprising that the Philadelphian Quakers remembered King George with regret, and would have been glad to get him back again under quiet conditions, and upon reasonable terms.<sup>1</sup>

Outside the Society of Friends, Philadelphian opinion was more equally distributed between Whig and Tory. That fact is established by the records of a famous dining club, instituted under the patronage of an ancient hero whose name has been connected with more than one powerful organisation the nature and objects of which he would probably have found it very difficult to comprehend. King Tammanend was the Delaware chief who in Sixth Month, 1684, made over to William Penn three hundred square miles of fertile land for the consideration of so much wampum, and so many guns, shoes, stockings, looking-glasses, blankets, and other goods, as the said William Penn should be pleased to give. Those were the terms of the agreement ; and the inventory of articles which the Indian monarch was content to accept in exchange for his real estate does not suggest any exalted notion of his sagacity. And yet, however much he may have lacked the most valuable endowment of that serpent whose effigy he affixed as a signature to legal documents, Tammanend was no common personage. He is represented as of noble mien and fine natural courtesy ; his tribesmen remembered him with veneration ; and the tradition of his extraordinary popularity among the white settlers is the origin of

<sup>1</sup> Washington's tranquil and upright mind harboured a genuine sympathy with the pure motives, and inflexible consciences, of the Quakers. Many years afterwards, when he was President of the United States, he asked one of them on what principle he had been opposed to the Revolution. "Friend Washington," was the reply, "upon the principle that I should be opposed to a change in the present government. All that was ever secured by Revolution is not an adequate compensation for the poor mangled soldiers, and for the loss of life and limb." "I honour your sentiments," replied the President ; "for there is more in them than mankind has generally considered." *The Quakers in the Revolution*, by Isaac Sharpless, President of Haverford College.

that curious immortality which he now, more than ever, seems likely to retain. Englishmen and Scotchmen, Welshmen and Irishmen, who had made their homes in the colonies, were in the habit of toasting their patron saints with flowing bumpers whenever their appointed days came round ; while native-born Americans, with no Saint Andrew or Saint Patrick of their own to celebrate, watched these jovial proceedings with a sense of envy, and at last of emulation. On the First of May, 1772, a hundred and twenty Pennsylvanians dined together for the first time in the character of the Sons of Saint Tammany of Philadelphia. They were the most important society of men then alive in their own, or any other, colony. When the Revolution broke out they took different sides ; many of them became prominent champions in their respective camps ; and a very careful and authentic analysis of that list of citizens has proved that they were, as nearly as possible, evenly divided on the political issues of their time.<sup>1</sup>

So closely adjusted was the balance of the two parties in Philadelphia when hostilities commenced. Matters had greatly altered in September 1777. By that time the city had been emptied of all who were ambitious to assist the Revolution with their counsels, or to strike a blow for it in the field. The more fiery spirits had long ago disappeared from civil life. Many young men of the upper or middle class, and some who were no longer young, had thrown up their commercial or professional prospects, and hurried in arms to the front ; while with little hesitation, and less than no compunction, scores upon scores of strapping apprentices had broken their indentures, and sought impunity and glory in a regi-

<sup>1</sup> As members of the Club, who supported the Revolution, it is only necessary to name the Cadwaladers and the Mifflins, President Reed and President Wharton, Doctor Benjamin Rush, and David Rittenhouse the astronomer ; while among the sons of Saint Tammany opposed to Independence were John Dickinson and Joseph Galloway, Governor Franklin, Governor Hamilton, Chief Justice Chew, and Judge Shippen. *The Society of the Sons of Saint Tammany of Philadelphia* ; by Francis Von A. Cabeen.

ment of the Continental Line.<sup>1</sup> A great number of townsmen were absent from their homes, exercising various, and most indispensable, functions in the service of the Republic. Pennsylvania sent the largest, and perhaps the most distinguished, delegation to Congress; and Congress had repaired for shelter to the town of York, ten miles on the safe side of the Susquehanna River, until the storm blew over. By far the ablest American administrator was Robert Morris of Philadelphia; and Morris, with others of his fellow-citizens who held office in the War and Finance Departments, was under the obligation of following the central government to its temporary place of refuge. Non-official society, moreover, had been woefully thinned during the course of the past twelvemonth. In the autumn of 1776, when Fort Washington had fallen, and the capital of Pennsylvania lay at the mercy of an invader, the wealthier partisans of Independence had hastily removed their families, and their most highly prized goods, out of reach of the Hessians; and they were still living in comfortless banishment throughout the least exposed districts of the Confederacy. The bad news from the Brandywine fairly cleared out the last of the rich Whigs.<sup>2</sup> There remained behind in Philadelphia those men who were Loyalists by conviction, and a considerable multitude of less estimable people who had not risen to the intellectual level of possessing any convictions at all. "Till we arrived," said an officer of the British Guards, "I believed it was a very populous city; but at present it is very thinly inhabited, and that only by the *canaille* and the Quakers." It is a striking proof of the prevalence of education, and the strength of public spirit, in an American colony, that circumstances and motives

<sup>1</sup> The day-books of David Evans, the leading cabinet-maker of Philadelphia, show the following entries for the year 1777:

"April 20. Zachariah Brant, my apprentice, enlisted in Captain Henderson's Company, Ninth Battalion, without my consent.

May 12. John Justice absconded from my shop, and entered the army as Ensign of Eleventh Battalion, without my approbation."

<sup>2</sup> "Most of our warm people have gone off." Mrs. Henry Drinker's Diary for Sept. 25, 1777.

connected with the personal creed of the individual had in two years reduced the population of a single town from thirty thousand to twenty thousand souls. For every native-bred inhabitant of either sex, over the age of ten years, at least one Royal soldier was now quartered within the city. If the attempt to heal political maladies by the drastic remedy of a military occupation could succeed anywhere, it must have succeeded in Philadelphia; and it may fairly be said that the specific which had, from the very first, commended itself to George the Third and his Cabinet, would never again meet with an equally favourable trial.

The owners of house property in the captured city had cause to tremble. Two years previously the statesmen in Downing Street had directed our naval and military commanders to destroy any place in America, large or small, where congresses or committees had assembled. That order had never been revoked, and it was very far indeed from being a dead letter. Several flourishing sea-ports had been laid in ashes; and Kingston on the Hudson River, which contained nearly four thousand people, was deliberately burned down by one of the Royal generals, in the course of this very autumn, on the express ground that it was a focus of disaffection, or, (as the general himself preferred to put it,) "a nursery for every villain in the country." If it was a capital crime for a town to have bred famous Whigs, and to have been the theatre of action for Revolutionary congresses and committees, Philadelphia, — the home of Benjamin Franklin, the seat of the First and the Second Congresses, and the workshop of that committee which had drawn up the Declaration of Independence, — could not reasonably claim exemption from the doom which had already overtaken less guilty communities. But, if the British ministers desired to extend to the capital of Pennsylvania the barbarous policy which they had applied to Norfolk and Falmouth, they would have to look for other instruments than those gallant soldiers who had fought their way to victory across the Brandy-



wine and the Schuylkill Rivers. Sir William Howe, although he failed in restraining the excesses of his German auxiliaries, was himself a kindly, honest gentleman; and the Earl of Cornwallis, who inspired the energies, and kept the conscience, of the British army, was then, as always, the incarnation of chivalry and humanity. After he entered Philadelphia, the town-mansion of a rich merchant had been appointed for his headquarters; but, when the lady of the house "represented to him that it would be impossible for her to remain under her own roof with so large a company of soldiers and servants, he courteously expressed his unwillingness to cause her annoyance, and he took himself that very afternoon to other lodgings."<sup>1</sup> A great majority of the British officers treated their civilian hosts with consideration and friendliness. Affable, easily pleased,—and, according to modern notions of the relation between age and military rank, delightfully and preposterously young,—they tried to make themselves endurable and, to the best of their ability, even welcome guests. Henry Drinker was a Loyalist Quaker, and one of the Virginian exiles; and Mrs. Drinker, in her husband's enforced absence, was much disconcerted when an English field-officer installed himself in her house and premises with a train of white and black servants, horses, cows and sheep, and a whole poultry-yard of hens and turkeys. But the Major proved to be a thoughtful, well-conducted, and teachable youth, over whose morals she carefully watched, and whose modest displays of hospitality towards his brother officers she took pleasure in promoting and regulating. Certain men of fashion and title, who had come straight from Ministerial circles in London, were prepared to be rude, and rather brutal, in their dealings with the native population; but these ill-conditioned personages were kept in order by the unconcealed disapproval of their comrades. "Lord Lindsey has arrived here;" (so Richard Fitzpatrick wrote from Philadelphia;) "but his *ton* is too bad even

<sup>1</sup> *Philadelphia, the Place and People*; Chapter 13.

for this part of the world, and nobody can bear him.”<sup>1</sup>

Those delegates to Congress, who came from less wealthy colonies, had been scandalised by the luxury and extravagance which prevailed in the capital of Pennsylvania. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia called the city “an attractive scene of debauch and amusement;” and to James Lovell of Massachusetts it was before everything else “a place of crucifying expenses.” Philadelphia, in both respects, more than maintained its character during the memorable winter when it lodged Sir William Howe and his army. After the river had been unblocked by the surrender of Fort Mifflin, an early tide brought up the Delaware a hundred and twenty sutlers and hucksters, Tories all, and Scotchmen nearly to a man. They distributed amongst themselves the most desirable places of business left vacant by the hurried departure of Whig traders, and filled the shop-fronts with goods which could be purchased only by hard money. So long as that precious commodity held out, abundance reigned in Philadelphia. The younger farmers braved very severe penalties in the event of their detection by Washington’s scouts, and brought their well-laden horses into the British lines from many miles round about. The women, shunning the high-ways, and travelling by night across the fields, carried in upon their backs fowls, eggs, fresh meat, and choice vegetables; and then returned to their villages with a pocketful of dollars and shillings, or, (what in the rural districts was then more coveted than silver,) a load of salt. There was often a plentiful beef-market; and great cheeses from New Jersey lay in heaps along the town-wharf.<sup>2</sup> The materials for hospitality were no

<sup>1</sup> This nobleman, in a letter to England, professed to pity the Royal officers who had been killed at Germantown “for having died by the hands of fellows who have hardly the form of men, and whose hearts are still more deformed than their bodies.”

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Historical Society of Philadelphia* for March 1847. *The History of Mooreland from the commencement of the American Revolution*, by William J. Buck. *Diary of Robert Morton*. *Philadelphia Society One Hundred Years Ago*, by Frederick D. Stone, 1879.

longer lacking; and, though even among Loyalists there were already some downcast faces and anxious hearts, the magnates of the city wished for nothing better than to see red coats round their table. Our British veterans, after a very short trial, pronounced the Philadelphian water too brackish to drink; but there was great store of Madeira in the cellars, and the wine was not grudged or spared. The younger officers found ample and varied amusement in the weekly balls at the City Tavern; the South Street theatre; the race-course for which room had been made within the circuit of the forts; "the cock-pit in Moore's Alley; the wild suppers at the Bunch of Grapes; and the Club dinners, late and long, in the rooms of the Indian Queen."<sup>1</sup>

The unmarried ladies of Philadelphia had never known so brilliant a season. Each of them had her individual preferences for scarlet, or for blue and yellow; but few among them were indifferent to a uniform as long as it was worn by a man of honour and prowess.<sup>2</sup> When a beautiful girl was likewise an enthusiastic Loyalist, there were no bounds to the admiration which she excited in Royal officers of every grade from the Commander-in-Chief downwards. A letter exists from Miss Rebecca Franks, the daughter of

<sup>1</sup> *Philadelphia, the Place and the People*; Chapter 13. Mrs. Elizabeth Drinker showed a motherly uneasiness about the effect of all this dissipation upon the young man whom she called "our Major." At first he was contented to give an occasional dinner to his comrades, who "made very little noise, and left at a reasonable hour." But, when the playhouse opened, he could not keep away from it; and at last, on two evenings running, he stayed out till after midnight at a concert and a public ball.

<sup>2</sup> In the previous summer, when the American army was at Germantown, Lieutenant MacMichael, of the Pennsylvania Line, wrote as follows in his diary: "August 3. The largest collection of young ladies I almost ever beheld came to camp. They marched in three columns. The field-officers detached scouting parties to prevent being surrounded by them. Being sent on scout, I at last sighted the ladies, and gave them to know that they must repair to Head-quarters; upon which they accompanied me as prisoners. But, on parading them at the Colonel's marquee, they were dismissed after we had treated them with a double bowl of Sangaree."

a keen Tory, addressed, (deplorable to relate,) to the wife of a Signer. "You can have no idea," she wrote, "of the life of continued amusement I live in. I can scarce have a moment to myself. I spent Tuesday evening at Sir William Howe's, where we had a concert and dance. I asked his leave to send you a handkerchief to show the fashions. He very politely gave me permission to send anything you wanted, though I told him you were a Delegate's lady. Oh, how I wished Mr. Paca would let you come in for a week or two! Tell him I'll answer for your being let to return. You'd have an opportunity of raking as much as you choose, at Plays, Balls, Concerts, or Assemblies. I have been but three evenings alone since we moved to town."<sup>1</sup> As seen from the outside by Tory husbands and fathers, who had remained in the rural districts in order to prevent their landed estates from going to rack and ruin, Philadelphia appeared to be an Elysium of felicity. James Allen, the member of a noted Loyalist family, sadly compared his own lot with that of his relatives who stayed behind in the city, bent on pleasure, and well supplied with coined money.<sup>2</sup> "There," he said, "I should have enjoyed ease and security, and freedom of speech, so long denied me here. . . . My wife writes me that everything is gay and happy, and it is like to prove a frolicking winter. The city is filled with goods: and provisions are plenty, though dear. Next campaign will be a warm, if not a decisive, one. It is impossible that this wretched country can subsist much longer."

<sup>1</sup> William Paca was a Congressman from Maryland. The passage quoted is condensed by the omission of a few sentences.

Miss Franks, like a brave woman, stuck to her colours when adversity came. She accompanied her father into exile, married a Royal colonel, and made her home in England. Forty years afterwards, when the war of 1812 was over and done with, she delighted General Winfield Scott by asking him whether he was the young rebel who had recently taken the liberty of fighting against His Majesty's troops at Chippewa Falls and Lundy Lane.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Allen, who had lately received a large present of Half Joes, — a Portuguese piece worth five and thirty shillings, — had gold to the amount of two hundred and forty pounds in hand.

A strong personal interest attaches itself to some of the participators in that round of joyous frivolity; for the British army contained an unusual proportion of young men with very noteworthy careers before them. Banastre Tarleton of the Light Dragoons, — who, during this respite from active warfare, was riding handicaps, and making love, with all the ardour of three-and-twenty, — was at present Brigade Major of Sir William Howe's cavalry. Before the American War ended, his fame as a leader of horse surpassed that of any officer, in any European service, who was still of an age to mount his charger. Captain Richard Fitzpatrick, of the Grenadier Guards, survived to hold military rank just below the very highest, and to acquire some distinction, and much popularity, in the House of Commons. And yet all which he accomplished by sword or tongue was little in comparison with the celebrity merited, rather than obtained, by his pen. No old-fashioned Whig, who loves a well-turned couplet, would admit that the author of *The Liars*, and of the most crisp and vivacious fragments of verse in the *Rolliad*, is inferior to any political satirist since John Dryden.

This brilliant young Guardsman had acquired his taste for books at the feet of Burke, and in free-flowing cousinly discourse with Charles Fox; but another promising officer, — who was seen more frequently than Fitzpatrick in Philadelphian society, and who took much greater pains to please it, — had served his apprenticeship in a very inferior literary school. Captain John André had been intended for civil life; and, before he came of age, he was a prime favourite among a circle of people in the Midland counties of England who talked of themselves, and of each other, as poets, with less than no just claim to that appellation. Supreme among them was Miss Anna Seward, the Swan of Lichfield, whose odes and sonnets, even after this lapse of time, it would be ungallant to criticise, and almost unkind to quote; while, on the other hand, her six volumes of letters arouse in the mind of the reader a



wish that she had never written except in rhyme. André had fallen in love with Honora Sneyd, who then was domesticated in the Seward family, and who had so little sense of discrimination that, after rejecting her young admirer, she became the second among several successive wives of Richard Lovell Edgeworth. André tore himself away from the scene of his disappointment, and sought occupation and change of thought in a military career. He became an admirable soldier. At this period he served as aide-de-camp to General Charles Grey, who would have none but the best about him; and he very soon was appointed Adjutant General of the army in America. He heartily believed in the cause for which he fought, and he possessed qualities and accomplishments which recommended that cause to wavering politicians of his own, and still more of the other, sex. Under his inspiration the English officers gave a series of performances in the Philadelphia theatre, from which professional players, who never were more than barely tolerated in that Quaker city, had been scared away by the terrors of the Revolution. André himself was the most capable of the actors, the chief scene-painter, the cleverest designer of costumes, and the only member of the company who was both willing and able to compose a prologue.<sup>1</sup>

Captain André soon had the opportunity of displaying his talents as a stage manager on a scale which made a considerable noise at the time, and has had its fair share of notice ever since. Six weeks before the end of 1777 Sir William Howe, finding the War Office

<sup>1</sup> Miss Seward, who was sincerely attached to André, and never ceased to lament his fate, always wrote about him with less than her usual affectation, and a somewhat firmer hold on the principle of grammar. "I am at present," (so she told a correspondent in the year 1787,) "re-reading the, by me, often read scriptures of your idolatry, the great lyrist Gray's Epistles. . . . André's letters, published with my Monody on him, have, to me, much more fascinating beauty." Six years afterwards she says, in a letter from Buxton: "Again do I seem surrounded by that happy party, as in the long-vanished period which formed the ill-starred love of André and Honora. There it is that tender sighs, and starting tears, pay, in mournful luxury, the tribute of remembrance."

deaf to his call for reinforcements, wrote home to the Secretary of State that he must beg to be relieved from his employment, as he no longer enjoyed the necessary confidence and support of his superiors. Lord George Germaine, who already foresaw the total collapse of his own absurd plan of campaign, and whose disloyalty matched his incompetence, resolved not to let slip this unexpected chance for proclaiming to the world at large that the general, and not the minister, was to blame. It was an easy matter to make Sir William Howe a culprit in the judgment of Englishmen. Taxpayers throughout the country laid at his door the indecisive character of those military results which had ill rewarded their enormous pecuniary sacrifices during the last forty months; and the feeling against him was nowhere so strong as among the talkers in London. Those gentlemen, (said Horace Walpole,) had subsisted "a whole fortnight on the capture of Mud Island;" which was meagre diet for people who had lived through the glorious years of 1759 and 1760, when every wind brought tidings of substantial conquests from one or another quarter of the globe. George the Third's ministers, like other weak and ill-conditioned rulers, had taken care to feed the newspapers with inspired paragraphs throwing contempt upon the adversaries with whom they were at war; and their industry in calling public attention to the paucity of American soldiers, and the misery and despair of the American people, had the natural effect of aggravating disappointment and discontent in England. "We were often told," (wrote the *Morning Post*,) "that Mr. Washington's army was inferior in number to the British, — sickly, dying, ill-clothed, dispirited, and by no means so well-armed as our own troops." Why, (it was asked,) had not the valiant, highly-disciplined, and well-appointed Royal veterans swept such a rabble off the face of the universe?

That was the tone of the Whig orators, and, still more copiously and emphatically, of the Tory pamphleteers and journalists. To refrain from throwing over an

ill-used, and only half successful, subordinate demanded a larger share of moral courage, and a finer sense of equity, than the Cabinet possessed. Early in February 1778 Germaine informed Sir William Howe that his resignation was accepted, and that Sir Henry Clinton, who was then in England, had been chosen to succeed him in his command. The British in Philadelphia, to their credit, took a very different view of the situation from that which prevailed across the ocean. With the prescient instinct of a brave and proud army, they recognised in Sir Henry Clinton a general under whose leadership they would gain no laurels, and compared him very unfavourably with the masterly tactician who, (whatever his detractors might allege against him,) had won half a dozen pitched battles, and had seized the hostile capital. Accustomed to Sir William Howe's ways, and all the fonder of him for his faults, they loved him as an indulgent commander, and a hearty companion; who lived and let live; and who, when off duty, was as genial to his followers, high and low, as on the actual day of battle he was formidable to the enemy. When the news of his approaching departure reached the mess-tables in Philadelphia, the whole army eagerly caught at a proposal to send him off on his homeward journey with a farewell demonstration of gratitude, devotion, and regret which should be an unspoken, but unequivocal, rebuke to the civilians in Downing Street.

Sir William's soldiers resolved to give, in their general's honour, the most splendid festivity that the New World had ever witnessed. All ranks would gladly have subscribed towards the cost of the entertainment; but a committee of wealthy field-officers took the entire expense upon themselves; and André, who was not as yet a field-officer, was allowed a free hand in the arrangement of the spectacle. He was largely responsible for a fantastic exhibition of sham chivalry which would have appeared infinitely romantic to Anna Seward, and absurdly inaccurate to a genuine and sturdy antiquary

like her contemporary, Doctor Percy. Captain Montrésor, with his sappers and miners, undertook to construct the military trophies, the triumphal arches, and the lists and barriers for a Passage of Arms which was to be the central feature of the show. André himself painted the decorations, selected the mottoes, and composed the amazing rhodomontades which were put into the mouths of those unlucky subalterns who consented to be disguised as Heralds. He flattered and cajoled the local beauties till they promised to grace the pageant; and he furnished the pattern, and was not above assisting in the manufacture, of their draperies. The Meschianza, (he said,) had turned him into a capable milliner, and had initiated him in all the mysteries "of cap-wire, gauze, and needles." That confession was made in a letter addressed to the daughter of a Loyalist Judge, — Margaret Shippen, a girl of seventeen, who in the course of another year became the wife of Benedict Arnold. Long afterwards, when she had passed through a dangerous illness and a period of unspeakable moral anguish, Colonel Tarleton wrote out to America from London that she was still the handsomest woman in England. John André made a pencil-sketch of Margaret Shippen in her ball-dress, with her hair built up to a height of eighteen inches above the forehead. The artist and his sitter were a well-assorted, but, (little as they then knew it,) a most tragic pair.<sup>1</sup>

These daughters of Pennsylvania were reproached with levity and heartlessness by sober patriots on either side of politics. The stories of cold and hunger, disease and death, which all through the winter arrived from that exposed and dreary upland where Washington's soldiers were doing their best to keep body and soul

<sup>1</sup> According to a tradition preserved in the Shippen family the Judge, at the very last moment, forbade his daughter to appear in the procession, and the day was spent at home in tears. It has been the fate of this poor lady to be slightly over-praised, and profusely over-censured, by American controversialists; and certain points of her conduct have been discussed in print at almost as great length as if they were circumstances in the personal history of Mary Queen of Scots.

together, aroused the compassion even of strong Loyalists;<sup>1</sup> and the American people in general were pained and shocked by the contrast between the suffering at Valley Forge, and the luxury and ostentation which ran riot within the city. It was remembered how, towards the commencement of the Revolution, the Philadelphians had proposed to compliment Mrs. Washington by a public ball; how Samuel Adams and President Hancock had begged her to discountenance the open pursuit of amusement during a great crisis in the fortunes of the country; and how earnestly she had assured the two statesmen that their wishes were in entire agreement with her own sentiments.<sup>2</sup> The Whigs kept the Meschianza in mind when their own hour of triumph came; but it was not in an American's nature to deal harshly with women, and the penalty inflicted was the mildest that could suffice to mark the offence. The return of Congress to Philadelphia was celebrated by a dance at the City Tavern, "offered to the young ladies who had manifested their attachment to the cause of virtue and freedom by sacrificing every convenience to the love of their country;" and to that dance the heroines of the Tournament were not invited.

The festival of the eighteenth May, 1778, fills as large a space in the chronicles of the early American Republic as did the Field of the Cloth of Gold in our own Tudor histories. The affair was called the Meschianza, — an Italian word that signifies "a Medley;" and a medley it was. The ceremonies began with a Grand Regatta. Gaily decked barges, interspersed at intervals with bands of music, moved slowly down a line of war-vessels and transports which, with yards manned and colours flying, extended along the whole

<sup>1</sup> "How insensible do these people appear, while our land is so greatly desolated, and death and sore destruction has overtaken, and impends over, so many!" That was the view held about the Meschianza by Mrs. Henry Drinker, whose husband had been punished for Loyalism. A collection of Tory opinions, very much to the same effect, is given in a note to the Introduction of Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence*.

<sup>2</sup> *Martha Washington*, by Anne Hollingsworth Wharton; Chapter 6.



river-front of the city. Then the company disembarked on a noble lawn, where a square plot of four acres had been marked out for the Tournament. An English, and an American, Queen of Beauty sat facing each other at either extremity of the ground, attended, both of them, by a bevy of six damsels in Turkish habits and turbans. Six Knights, resplendent in crimson and white silk, and caracoling on grey steeds, rode forth to assert that the ladies of the Blended Rose excelled all others in wit and beauty; and the challenge was accepted by as many Knights of the Burning Mountain, in black and orange raiment, and on coal-black horses. A more impressive sight was the compact hedge of well-drilled infantry, planted stiff and silent around the whole enclosure. The cavaliers ran their tilts, shivered their lances, and then fired pistols at each other until the Marshal proclaimed that the ladies were satisfied with the proofs of love and valour given by their respective champions. When these antics were concluded, the actors and spectators walked in procession to an adjoining mansion, and passed, through a hall stained in imitation of Sienna marble, into a ballroom where the walls, picked out in blue and gold, were reflected in eighty or ninety enormous mirrors. At midnight there was a supper of twelve hundred dishes, lighted by as many wax-candles, and served by negroes in oriental trappings, with silver collars and bracelets. The lawn outside blazed with illuminations, and transparencies, and fountains spouting fire; and the proceedings were terminated by the roar and rush of innumerable rockets. That was the last gunpowder which General Howe saw burned in America.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The splash and notoriety of the Meschianza, when contrasted with the substantial value of the successes which it was designed to celebrate, were alien to British military sentiment everywhere outside Philadelphia. When General Eliott was preparing to leave Gibraltar, after his immortal defence of the Rock, the garrison desired to give him an entertainment, in order to mark their opinion of his eminent services. An officer of high rank begged to know in what shape the compliment would be most agreeable to him. "Anything," replied the veteran, "but a Meschianza."

Lord George Germaine's ill-conceived plan of attacking the citadel of the Revolution from three distant quarters had already been severely punished ; but, for the present, he escaped the full penalties of his faulty strategy by the misconduct of adversaries whose folly equalled, and whose perversity even exceeded, his own. Washington, indeed, had done more than his part on behalf of the common cause. At great risk to himself, he had depleted his scanty ranks, and despatched a generous supply of staunch veterans to the assistance of the Northern army in its hour of need. That army had triumphed, rapidly, completely, and far beyond the hopes of anyone except himself ; and Washington's own turn had now come to be helped by the general towards whose victory he had so largely and unselfishly contributed. It is impossible to doubt that, if Philip Schuyler had still been in command when the firing ceased at Saratoga, his best fighting men would have been started on their march down the Hudson Valley as soon as they had cleaned their gun-barrels. That was the course demanded alike by public spirit and personal gratitude ; but Schuyler's successor had little of the first, and of the latter much less than none at all. The very last person in the world whose interests General Gates would take any trouble, or make any sacrifice, to promote, was George Washington. Having ruined and supplanted Schuyler, Gates henceforward flew at higher game ; and he had not the smallest intention of taking any steps to ensure the success, and consolidate the influence, of that military leader whom he now regarded as his solitary rival. Burgoyne capitulated on the seventeenth of October ; and a fortnight afterwards Washington was reduced to petition, urgently and specifically, for the performance of a service which should have been done unasked. One of the gentlemen of his family, (to use his own expression,) was deputed to visit General Gates in order to point out the many happy consequences which would accrue from an immediate reinforcement being sent from the

Northern army. The gentleman selected was Alexander Hamilton; but his persuasive tongue altogether failed in recalling Horatio Gates to a sense of honour. The partisans of that intriguer induced Congress to pass a Resolution to the effect that the soldiers transferred from the Northern army should in no case exceed two thousand five hundred men; and the larger portion of this stingy detachment was intercepted and detained on its way southward. Only a very few regiments, thinned in numbers and behind their time, were eventually permitted to rejoin the American camp on the Schuylkill River.

It is possible enough that, if Washington's hands had been loyally and promptly strengthened, Sir William Howe would have been forced to relinquish Philadelphia, and retreat across country to New York, before the year was over. While the contest for the Delaware was still in progress, five or six thousand additional troops would have enabled the Republicans to operate powerfully and decisively in the Jerseys without relaxing their grasp on Pennsylvania. But, before the end of November, Fort Mercer and Fort Mifflin had succumbed; the British possessed the waterway, and had made the city proof against assault; and Washington reluctantly abandoned his schemes and efforts for expelling the invader, and fell back upon the second-best. Bad as might be his prospects, they had been worse on that day twelvemonth. If Philadelphia had fallen in December 1776, it had been his purpose to retire beyond the Susquehanna River, and thence, (should misfortune still pursue him,) into the recesses of the Alleghany Mountains; but in December 1777 he determined to remain at a point where he could hold the Royal foraging-parties in respect throughout the winter, and be near at hand, when spring came, to avail himself of the very earliest opportunity for turning the tables upon his adversary. He stationed his army on a piece of land a mile in depth, extending three thousand yards from east to

west along the southern bank of the Schuylkill River. The ground on two sides fell away in acclivities of a height, and a slope, perfectly adapted for defence by cannon and musketry; and the rear was protected by a stream which supplied water-power for an establishment of iron-works known as Valley Forge. That little village, clustered at the bottom of a deep ravine, gave a name to what, as time goes on, bids fair to be the most celebrated encampment in the world's history. On the eighteenth December the soldiers remained in quarters, taking their part in a public Thanksgiving which, with distress and danger around them, and starvation immediately in front of them, was something of a pathetic ceremony; and next morning they spread themselves over hills thickly covered with that forest timber which an American army is always capable of putting to valuable uses. Washington, never happier than when handling a pencil and a pair of compasses, had drawn out the ground-plan of his military city.<sup>1</sup> His rank and file were divided into parties of twelve, and directed to build cabins of a size and pattern minutely laid down in the General Orders; and, in every one of his battalions, a prize of twelve dollars was promised to the squad of men who housed themselves most speedily and commodiously. As fast as their huts were finished, the gangs of workmen were passed on to the redoubts and intrenchments; and before long the camp had become, to all intents and purposes, an impenetrable fortress.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The General has a great turn for mechanics. It's astonishing with what niceness he directs everything in the building way, condescending even to measure the things himself, that all may be perfectly uniform." *Diary of Mr. John Hunter, a merchant from London*; Mount Vernon, November 17, 1785.

<sup>2</sup> The American army never stopped long in any one place without fortifying it to the verge of impregnability. Colonel Boyle quotes the description given by an officer on Sir William Howe's Staff of the position occupied by Washington before he moved back upon Valley Forge. "For a quarter of a mile in front of the American camp was the thickest abattis of felled trees I ever saw, similar to what the French had last war at Ticonderoga; and, had we proceeded, we should probably have shared

It was well that these indispensable labours were brought to a conclusion before the spirit of the troops was deadened, and their bodily strength exhausted; for they were very soon in evil case. The management of the war by a popular assembly was a system for which there had been something to say during the opening scenes of the Revolution; but that system had entirely broken down under the stress of invasion and defeat. The delegates to Congress, whom Thomas Paine had inoculated with a British radical's distrust of paid officials, still preferred to do everything of importance themselves, and were now doing it very badly. Already the national senate of America had degenerated, from a business-like and respected representative body, into the thing which Englishmen, borrowing an old classical term from the most stirring period of English history, always have called, and always will call, a Rump. The most experienced Congressmen were employed far away, — negotiating in foreign countries, and governing or fighting in distant regions of the Confederacy. Many a capable citizen, actuated by the intense local patriotism of an American, was absorbed in provincial politics, to the exclusion of any keen and intelligent interest in the central Government of his nation.<sup>1</sup> During the last months of 1777 the sittings of Congress were attended by sixteen or seventeen, and sometimes only by nine or ten, members. This fluctuating handful of untrained, and for the most part insignificant, personages, — with co-equal powers, and no mutual

the same fate with General Abercrombie's army. We reconnoitred for nine miles round the camp to see if we could find any opening; but it was all equally strong."

<sup>1</sup> "This, more than ever, is the time for Congress to be filled with the first characters from every State, instead of having a thin Assembly, and many States totally unrepresented, as is the case at present. I have often regretted the pernicious, and what appears to me fatal, policy of having our ablest men employed in the formation of the more local Governments, leaving the great national concern to be managed by men of more contracted abilities." So George Washington wrote to his brother at the end of April, 1778.



understanding as to the distribution amongst themselves of executive functions, — performed or neglected, as the humour took them, the whole administrative work of the State.

These methods of proceeding had long ago been condemned by Robert Morris in precise and forcible language. If Congress, (he said,) meant to win in the struggle with Great Britain, they must pay good men to do their business as it ought to be done; for no Delegate could attend to his senatorial duties, and at the same time serve his country in the capacity of an executive officer. "I do aver," so Morris continued, "that there will be more money totally lost in horses, waggons, and cattle, for want of sufficient persons to look after them, than would have paid all the salaries that Paine ever did, or ever will, grumble at." The wisdom of these criticisms and recommendations was justified by the event. When affairs were taken out of the hands of boards, and given over to competent individuals; when single ambassadors superseded diplomatic commissions in Europe, and chiefs of departments took the place of administrative committees at home; then, and not till then, the long and weary conflict was at last brought to a successful issue.<sup>1</sup>

A full year had elapsed since Robert Morris uttered his protest and his prophecy; but the mind of Congress was still unchanged, and its practice had altered for the worse. The Commissary General of the American army, ever since hostilities commenced, had been Colonel Joseph Trumbull, the eldest and worthy son of the Governor of Connecticut. Acting in close and familiar concert with Washington he kept the soldiers amply, and often lavishly, supplied with victuals whenever the camp was stationary; and, in those black months when forced marches, and repeated defeats, brought their inevitable consequences in the shape of want and hardship, it was very generally admitted that

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is extracted, almost word for word, from *The Life of Robert Morris*, by Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, Ph.D.

the Chief of the Commissariat was not to blame. The recognised success of an arrangement which pleased the army, and by this time had been brought into smooth working order, was too much for the equanimity of Congress. Towards the middle of the year 1777 the politicians at Philadelphia, in their jealousy of military administrators, established a rule that subordinate agents, in the service of the Commissariat, should account directly with Congress over the head of their departmental superiors. Colonel Trumbull, after an honest and patient attempt to carry forward his duty under these new and impossible conditions, — threw up his office, and retired into private life.<sup>1</sup> He was soon followed by the Quartermaster General, who went to his home on the plea of ill-health, and after a while sent in his resignation. Never did a set of public men commit a greater blunder from a poorer motive. Even Horatio Gates, who seldom permitted himself to question the policy of Congress, confessed that "such a solecism was hardly ever committed as changing the Commissariat in the middle of a campaign."<sup>2</sup> Other Governments, with disastrous results, have sometimes swapped horses when crossing a stream; but the folly of Congress went altogether beyond a metaphor which is supposed to express the quintessence of human fatuity. Their Quartermaster General had ceased, in the summer of 1777, to discharge those duties upon which the well-being, and in extreme cases the very existence, of an army in the field depends; and no successor was

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Trumbull told his father, in July 1777, that he was about to meet a Committee of Congress, on the affairs of his Department, which were wholly at a stand. "I am almost fatigued to death," he wrote. "I have been obliged to stand at the scales myself. All the money in the universe would not tempt me to serve another three months such as the last." In the course of the year the Colonel died, — killed, if ever man was, by hard work. His story is set forth in Jonathan Trumbull's noble and touching Memorial to the President of Congress. *Trumbull Papers*; Part III., pages 279-282.

<sup>2</sup> Horatio Gates to Jonathan Trumbull; September 4, 1777.

appointed until the month of March in the year that followed. During the later part of that protracted interval American military history presents a monotonous tale of cruel, and altogether unnecessary, suffering.

The effect of this calamitous policy, clearly perceptible from the very first, was brought into startling prominence as soon as ever Washington had settled himself down at Valley Forge. On the twentieth December, General Varnum of Massachusetts reported that his division had eaten no meat during forty-eight hours, and had been three whole days without bread. Next morning the Commander-in-Chief wrote to the President of Congress that ominous symptoms of discontent in several of the regiments "had brought forth the only Commissary in the purchasing line in camp, and, with him, this melancholy and alarming truth that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour;" and the same gentleman admitted, on cross-examination, that he was not aware whence, or when, any additional supply would be forthcoming. Dearth was converted into famine; and famine endured over the space of two live-long months. As late as the sixteenth February 1778, according to Washington, "a part of the army had been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days." Evening after evening the cry of "No Meat! No Meat!" could be heard along the line of huts. Some of the generals, wrung with pity for their followers, tried to persuade themselves that the English race was unduly addicted to a diet of animal food, and suggested a substitute in the shape of soaked wheat and sugar, or soup "thickened with bread."<sup>1</sup> On those many days when there were no emaciated bullocks to be killed for food, vitality was maintained on a porringer

<sup>1</sup>The notion of making soup without stock gave rise to some grim jests among the rank and file. There was a story current in the American army of a well-meaning officer who inquired what the men were cooking in their kettle. "A stone, Colonel:" was the reply. "They say there is some strength in stones if you can get it out."

of flour-paste, or a lump of dough baked in the embers. All ranks fared alike; and the medical staff shared the ration of the private soldiers, three-fourths of whom were qualified to be patients if there had been any tonics or cordials with which to treat them. In the middle of September, by a special vote of Congress, thirty hogsheads of rum had been served out to the troops "in compliment for their gallant behaviour at the battle of Brandywine;" but, all through the winter, there was only one beverage on draught at Valley Forge. "Fire-cake and water for breakfast!" cried Doctor Albigence Waldo. "Fire-cake and water for dinner! Fire-cake and water for supper! the Lord send that our Commissary for Purchases may live on fire-cake and water!" Life in that camp was a dull and drawn out tragedy; but not a few of its inmates, after the habit of American humourists, accepted their misfortunes with ironical acquiescence. Doctor Waldo had been at pains to enumerate in his diary the residential attractions of a place like Valley Forge. There was, (he wrote,) plenty of wood and water; and the hill-side faced the south. The soldiers had no temptation to plunder, for there was nothing to steal. They all of them would learn to be heavenly-minded, like Jonah in the belly of the great fish; and no one need be home-sick, because the reflections suggested by his surroundings would lead him to employ his leisure hours in filling his knapsack with the necessities required for the journey to another, and a better, home.

That was indeed the case, in sad and stern earnest. Before the army reached Valley Forge nearly three thousand of the rank and file were returned unfit for duty "by reason of their being barefoot, and otherwise naked."<sup>1</sup> Washington, in an outspoken and eloquent exposition of the future which awaited his unfortunate army, told how the troops, for want of blankets, were

<sup>1</sup> "The Commander-in-Chief offers a reward of ten dollars to any person who shall, by nine o'clock on Monday morning, produce the best substitute for shoes, made of raw hides." General Washington's Orderly Book for November 22, 1777.

obliged "to sit up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural and common way." "Soap, vinegar, and other articles allowed by Congress," (so ran another sentence of the same letter,) "we see none of; nor have we seen them, I believe, since the battle of Brandywine. The first, indeed, we have little occasion for, few men having more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all."<sup>1</sup> Hardly anyone was comfortably clad; a great number of soldiers lacked even the means of decency; and every trace of military finery had long ago vanished. Officers mounted guard in a sort of dressing-gown, made of an old rug, or a woollen bed-quilt, and kept what remained of their uniforms against the return of better times. Months afterwards, when the worst was over, a party of aides-de-camp gave a supper to which no one, who possessed a whole suit, was admitted; and the room was crowded with distinguished guests.

Anthony Wayne reported, in passionate language, that near a third of his men had no shirt under Heaven, and that their outer garments hung about their limbs in ribbons. He had purchased for them, (he stated,) from his own pocket, a large quantity of stout cloth; but the Clothier General held the proceeding to be irregular, and refused to issue the material which he had in store. Wayne had always loved to see his people smart, and he now could not endure the consciousness that they were miserable. "I am not fond of danger;" — so he wrote of himself, although no one else would have said it about him; — "but I would most cheerfully agree to enter into action once every week in place of visiting each hut in my encampment, which is my constant practice, and where objects strike my eye and ear whose wretched condition beggars all description. The whole army is sick, and crawling with vermin." Meanwhile hogsheads of raiment, and footgear, were lying at different places along the roads and in the woods, spoiling

<sup>1</sup> Washington to the President of Congress; Valley Forge, 23 December, 1777.



for want of teams, or of money to pay the teamsters. The Commander-in-Chief had warned Congress that military arrangements, "like the mechanism of a clock, must necessarily be imperfect and disordered by want of a part;" and, in the absence of a Quartermaster General, the Transport Service was now a clock without the weights. "Perhaps by midsummer," wrote Washington, "the soldier may receive thick stockings, shoes, and blankets, which he will contrive to get rid of in the most expeditious manner. By an eternal round of the most stupid management the public treasure is expended to no kind of purpose, while the men have been left to perish by inches with cold and nakedness."

Winter descended, in all its horrors, upon the famished and ragged army. On Christmas-day the weather broke, and next morning the snow lay four inches deep. It remained piled up against, and between, the huts in high and solid drifts; for the first downfall was followed by a long procession of clear and very cold days, with nights of bitter frost. "When the trampled mud froze suddenly, the rough ridges were like knives; and, although men cut up their blankets, and bound the stripes about their feet, the flesh was soon as unprotected as before."<sup>1</sup> The white ground, in and about the camp, was everywhere marked with crimson stains. High-born officers of the Hessian regiments in Philadelphia professed to disbelieve that there could be any want of shoes in an army where so many of the Colonels had formerly been cobblers by trade; but Lafayette, who was another sort of nobleman, related with deep feeling how the feet and legs of many poor fellows were congealed and blackened till life could only be saved by amputation. When off duty the men never stirred outside their cabins, which, (as the young Frenchman told his wife,) were no gayer, and far more chilly, than dungeons; and they soon

<sup>1</sup> *The Private Soldier under Washington*; Chapter 3. The account there given is drawn from John Shreve's *Personal Narrative*.

became to the full as noisome. In order to purify the air within these dwellings, pitch and tar were lighted, and the powder of a blank musket-cartridge was burned every morning. There was talk of supplying warmth by piling the floors with straw, plenty of which might be procured at no great distance from camp; but the means of conveyance were wanting. The horses, worse fed even than their masters, died by hundreds every week. A committee of Congressmen, who towards the end of January made a visit of inspection to Valley Forge, ascertained that "almost every species of transportation was performed by men who, without a murmur, patiently yoked themselves to little carriages of their own making, or loaded their wood and provisions on their backs." For the sick and the ailing there was no escape except into scenes of appalling horror. The eleven so-called hospitals at Valley Forge were nothing better than larger, but more crowded, hovels, where the invalids had neither proper medicines, nor special diet; and where they lay on the bare ground, with no covering except their own tattered clothes, side by side with dying, and sometimes dead, comrades.

The rate of mortality in these pest-houses may be estimated by the condition of things which prevailed in the most favourably situated of all the American hospitals. Some forty miles to the north of Philadelphia was the village of Bethlehem, where a colony of Moravians had been planted by Count Zinzendorf himself.<sup>1</sup> Here, for a generation back, these exemplary people had lived in modest plenty under a strict form of Christian Socialism. Their rule forbade them to bear arms; but none the less did they play an honourable part in the national drama. On the eve of Trenton, in December 1776, Washington ordered the General Hospital of the Continental Army to be established at

<sup>1</sup> Count Zinzendorf and his followers arrived at their future home on Christmas-Eve in the year 1741, and passed their first night in a stable. Thence the name of Bethlehem.

Bethlehem. The little settlement was over-filled and over-burdened from the very first; and, by the end of 1777, it was fairly overwhelmed. In September and October long trains of carts, laden with mangled and helpless soldiers, arrived from the battlefields of Brandywine and Germantown; and two months later on, when every cranny of room was already occupied, and every ounce of wholesome food bespoken, the flood of human misery began to pour in from Valley Forge. Officers were nursed, "in private houses, by the matrons and maidens;" a great wooden shed was hastily run up in one of the gardens; and a three-storied barrack, which had served as a hostel for the Single Brethren, was made over to the rank and file. This building had been certified for two hundred and fifty beds; but it was soon packed from cellar to roof with that number thrice told. Congress, having wantonly thrown out of gear the whole existing machinery of purchase, transport, and supply, could do little or nothing to help; and the limited resources of the Moravian community were altogether unequal to the strain. Dysentery, and every form of pulmonary illness, took a large toll of life; and the malady which our ancestors knew by the ghastly names of putrid, or jail, fever raged unchecked, and almost uncombated. Four or five patients were known to die on the same pallet of straw before it was changed.<sup>1</sup> Of eleven junior-surgeons and mates ten took the infection. Three house-stewards were struck down in succession; and six or seven of the Brothers expired in the performance of their volunteer duties. A fine Virginian regiment, the pride of the old Dominion, sent forty privates into hospital, of whom three came out alive. The Chief Pastor of the Moravians attended all the death-beds, if such an appellation can be given to

<sup>1</sup> *Report by Doctor William Smith, of the Hospital Staff.* Doctor Samuel Finley said that the matron, the Commissariat officer, the nurses and waiters, and all but one of the surgeons, were down with the fever. "We lost," he declared, "from ten to twenty of camp diseases, for one by weapons of the enemy."

those heaps of polluted litter; and the good man has left it on record that, in the course of a few months, three hundred military graves were dug in the cemetery at Bethlehem.<sup>1</sup>

After a very short experience of Valley Forge, Washington informed Congress that, "unless some great and capital change suddenly took place" in the management of the Commissariat, the army must inevitably perish of starvation, or disappear by wholesale desertion. He had not adequately gauged the devotion of his soldiers to their country, and their personal affection for himself. All through December and January a considerable number of privates in the Continental regiments escaped across their own lines by tens and twenties, and presented themselves at the British outposts in a shocking condition of destitution and debility. But these men were for the most part of European nationality. Native-born Americans remained with the colours, retaining the spirit, and, (so far as might be,) preserving the outward semblance, of soldiers. The men in each hut contributed articles of clothing to make up a costume for anyone of their number who was ordered on picket; and, whenever an enemy was in the neighbourhood, they turned out from their quarters silently and resignedly and stood under arms during the hour of piercing cold that precedes a mid-winter dawn. They looked up with respectful friendliness to a chief who allowed himself no privileges or comforts that were denied to others. Washington's table was sparsely furnished, and very roughly served.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *An Address delivered at the unveiling of a Tablet erected in Memory of the Soldiers of the Continental Army who suffered and died at the Military Hospital of Bethlehem*, by James M. Beck, of the Philadelphian Bar; June 19, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Testimony is borne to the habitual frugality of Washington's military household by a political adversary who would willingly have caught him tripping. Two months before Valley Forge, Doctor Benjamin Rush paid a visit to the Republican camp, and wrote as follows in his private journal: "Dined with the Commander-in-Chief of the American army. No wine, only grog. Knives and forks enough for only half the company. One half the company eat, after the other had dined at the same table."

He continued to live under a tent, in the roughest of weathers, until the army had roofed itself in; and then he removed his headquarters to a house which was certainly not a palace. No one was allowed to know, — no one will ever know, — Washington's inmost thoughts during that crucial period in his own, and his country's, destiny. His heart bled for his young soldiers, towards whom he felt as a father, but whom he was powerless to succour in their distress; and his peace of mind was sorely tried by the machinations of his political enemies. The Commander-in-Chief of the national armies was well aware that some of the cleverest, and all the least estimable, Congressmen were plotting his downfall with adroit and unscrupulous assiduity. They calumniated his motives. They disparaged his abilities. They deliberately withheld from him absolute necessities, while demanding of him utter impossibilities. Depressed and anxious, he was not perturbed out of measure, inasmuch as he believed himself to be in direct relations with an authority which was superior to Congress. The old ironmaster of Valley Forge, with whom he lodged, used to relate that one day, while strolling up the creek, he found the General's horse fastened to a sapling. Searching around, he saw Washington in a thicket by the road-side, on his knees in prayer, with tears running down his cheeks. The honest man, who was a Quaker preacher, "felt that he was upon holy ground, and withdrew unobserved." On returning home he told his wife that the nation would surely survive its troubles, because, if there was anyone on earth that the Lord would listen to, it was George Washington.<sup>1</sup>

The statesmen who swayed the counsels of the Republic had no mercy on their unhappy soldiers. They appeared to imagine that an army, — in which the artillery horses were too few and weak to haul the cannon,

<sup>1</sup> Lossing's *Field Book*; Vol. II., Chapter 5.



and the provision-waggons had no teams, and the sentries were hardly strong enough to drag themselves between their station on the rampart, and the door of their wretched cabin, — was at all times, and for all purposes, in complete and efficient marching order. Congress could see no reason why the four or five thousand broken and half-clothed men, who were returned as effectives, should not forthwith advance upon Philadelphia, and drive out of the forts, through the city, and across the Delaware, three times their own force of well-fed and well-equipped veterans, supported by a powerful and admirably commanded fleet of battleships. Washington was repeatedly ordered to take the opinion of his generals on this insane proposal; and, within the space of a single week, the principal officers of his army had been known to cover, between them, at least two hundred pages of foolscap paper in answer to the reiterated demands of Congress. No true soldier could find any pleasure in explaining to ill-informed and malevolent civilians his motives for recoiling from a hazardous enterprise which they invited him to undertake; but Washington, and his lieutenants, faced the ungrateful task like brave and honest men. Nathanael Greene reminded Congress how “the King of Prussia, the greatest general of the age,” condemned the practice of assaulting a body of good troops posted in villages, and much more in regular, brick-built towns; and how His Majesty confessed that such an operation had once and again ruined the best part of his own army. “A winter’s campaign,” wrote Greene, “and an attack upon the city of Philadelphia, appear to me like forming a crisis for American liberty which, if unsuccessful, I fear will prove her grave.” Henry Knox, — the best artilleryman, and almost the best tactician, in the Confederacy, — pronounced it impossible, without the aid of battering-cannon and mortars, first to storm a number of separate, self-contained redoubts; and then to capture, street by street, a solidly constructed town garrisoned by many thousand of that very infantry a few score of whom had

so recently made good the defence of the Chew Mansion against a host of enemies. His verdict, (he said,) was "clearly, pointedly, and positively" unfavourable to the proposed assault, because it could only result in certain and inevitable defeat.<sup>1</sup> The Commander-in-Chief did not shelter himself behind the authority of his subordinates, but expressed his own view freely, and, on one particular occasion, with indignant vehemence. The Pennsylvanian Legislature had thought fit to lecture him for retiring into cantonments, amidst the luxuries of Valley Forge, with as much solemnity, and circumstance, as if they had been a Carthaginian Senate rebuking Hannibal for having wintered in Capua. "I can assure those gentlemen," Washington replied, "that it is a much easier thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room, by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow without blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel abundantly for them; and, from my soul, I pity those miseries which it is not in my power to relieve or prevent."

Those gallant generals of the Continental army, who had borne the brunt from the very first, were at this moment learning what it was to pass through

"a cloud  
Not of war only, but detractions rude."

If there were any three men who, faults or no faults, had never swerved a hand's breadth in the perilous place, they were Greene, Sullivan, and Stirling. The first of them was now railed at as a sycophant; the

<sup>1</sup> "Marshal Saxe," (so General Knox wrote,) "says redoubts are the strongest and most excellent kind of Field Fortification, and infinitely preferable to extended lines, because each redoubt requires a separate attack, one of which succeeding does not facilitate the reduction of the others. Charles the Twelfth, with the best troops in the World, was totally ruined in the attack of some redoubts at Pultowa, although he succeeded in taking three of them."

second was called a weak, vain braggart, — a mere madman under fire; and the third was classed as nothing superior to a lazy, ignorant drunkard. That was the description given of them by Benjamin Rush of Pennsylvania, a Signer who, but for the courageous exertions of the warriors whom he reviled, would long ago have dangled on a British gallows with the Declaration of Independence suspended at his neck. The same critic pronounced that a great man must be judged by the company which he keeps, and that the Commander-in-Chief of the American forces was surrounded, flattered, and governed by such paltry satellites as General Greene, General Knox, and a certain aide-de-camp of one-and-twenty who went by the name of Colonel Alexander Hamilton. James Lovell, an influential delegate from Massachusetts, ridiculed Washington as a military leader whose only notion of strategy was to collect masses of troops for the sole purpose of wearing out stockings, shoes, and breeches; and who by this time had “be-Fabiused affairs into a very disagreeable posture.” An anonymous letter, redolent of envy, was addressed to the President of Congress by no feeble hand. The people of America, (so the writer asserted,) were guilty of idolatry by making a man their God. No good could be expected from the army until Baal and his worshippers were banished from the camp.

It would be garbling history to slur over the fact that these ebullitions of ill-mannered, and most unpatriotic, rancour were accepted with favour in a quarter from which very different conduct might have been expected. John Adams, in obedience to the happiest inspiration which occurred to him in the course of his long and honourable career, had been the earliest to suggest the nomination of George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the national forces; but now, at the most critical period of the Revolutionary War, he withheld from the general of his own choice that support which was due to the personal relations of the two men, and essential to the salvation of their common country. Adams professed

to himself, and to the world at large, that he held Washington in high regard ; but, when one public man is sincerely attached to another, he will abstain from assailing him with hackneyed and offensive party-taunts. The stock in trade of Washington's political adversaries consisted in the eternal repetition of two special charges, — that he was the object of idolatry, and that he played Fabius Maximus Cunctator to the loss of the American cause. The letters and speeches of John Adams were bestrewn with allusions to that pair of well-worn topics. He was "sick of Fabian systems." He had looked for vigour and audacity, and was "weary with so much insipidity." His favourite toast, (so he declared,) was "a short and violent war." He hoped that Congress would elect their generals annually ; and then some great men would be obliged at the year's end to go home, and serve the nation in some other capacity not less necessary, and better adapted to their genius. And, in the February of 1777, he went so far as to tell Congress that he was distressed to see some of the Members of the House disposed to worship an image which their own hands had molten. Samuel Adams, and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, had always believed that military ambition was a formidable menace to the stability of popular government ; and John Adams very soon came round to the same opinion. He expressed a strong apprehension that to entrust the Commander-in-Chief with the promotion of generals and colonels would be dangerous to public liberty ; and, when the Hessians were defeated, and the British navy foiled, in their combined attack upon Fort Mercer, he thanked God that the glory of that great success could not be ascribed to Washington, inasmuch as "idolatry and adulation would have been so excessive as to have imperilled the freedom of America." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To the end of his days John Adams never praised Washington without explanations and reservations. In 1807, when Washington had lain for eight years in the family vault at Mount Vernon, Adams enumerated to Dr. Rush a long string of reasons which accounted for the great man's

Never were distrust and suspicion more senselessly misplaced, or Constitutional safeguards and precautions more absolutely superfluous. It was incredible that the thirteen States, or any one of them, would consent to settle down beneath the rule of a military despot; and, (if anything could be surer than certainty,) it was more inconceivable still that a man, whose every action was determined by an ever-present sense of right and wrong, should contemplate the transcendent wickedness of gripping with mailed hand the throat of his native country. Under no circumstances whatsoever would Washington have yielded to that temptation; and in his eyes, moreover, it was not even a temptation. His ideal of existence was as far as possible removed from the splendour and license of a usurper and a tyrant, — from the power which is obtained by crime, and can never again be surrendered with safety. He looked wistfully forward to the conclusion of the war as an event which would replace him in the secure and permanent condition of a private citizen. "The first wish of my soul," he wrote in June 1782, "is to return speedily into the bosom of that country which gave me birth, and, in the sweet enjoyment of domestic happiness and the company of a few friends, to end my days in quiet, when I shall be called from this stage." More than one autocrat of evil fame has pleased himself, during an interval of leisure, by drawing Arcadian pictures of his pursuits and aspirations; but Washing-

immense elevation above his fellows; — such as a handsome face; a tall stature, like the Hebrew sovereign chosen because he out-topped all other Jews by a head; an elegant form; graceful attitudes and movements; and a large and imposing fortune, which induced the world to give him full credit for his disinterestedness. Washington "possessed the gift of silence." He had great self-command; and, whenever he lost his temper, either the love, or the fear, of those about him induced them to conceal his weakness from the world. Besides, (said Adams,) "he was a Virginian. This is an equivalent to five Talents. Virginian geese are all swans. They trumpet one another with the most pompous and mendacious panegyrics. The Philadelphians and New Yorkers, who are local and partial enough to themselves, are meek and modest in comparison with Virginian Old Dominionism." *Old Family Letters, Copied from the Originals for Alexander Biddle*; pages 168-170.



ton's passion for the quiet life was no theatrical talk. He never was so perfectly contented, and so continuously happy, as during the fifty months which he spent, — after peace was proclaimed, and the army disbanded, — at his riverside home amidst field-sports and rural duties. It was too calm and bright to last. In April 1789 George Washington was chosen President of the United States; and the sixteenth of that month was a black day in his private diary. "About ten of the clock," (he wrote,) "I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its calls, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

Unrestrained by the influence, and in some cases encouraged by the sympathy, of statesmen who ought to have known better, the enemies of Washington set themselves deliberately at work to drive out of public employment the man on whom the hopes of their nation rested, and who embodied in his own person all that was most valuable in the national character.<sup>1</sup> They were a knot of vain and small-minded people. But they had the qualities of their defects; and their petty, artful, and intensely unscrupulous manœuvres were well calculated to secure their ends. The intrigue, which rumbled and spluttered below the surface of affairs all through that ill-famed winter, is known in American history as Conway's Cabal. Conway was an Irishman by birth, who had seen much service in the French army. He had come across the Atlantic with a recommendation from Silas Deane; and Congress appointed him a Major General, to the keen vexation of the native-born colonels whom he superseded. Their

<sup>1</sup> "I glory in the character of a Washington, because I know him to be only an exemplification of the American character." John Adams wrote thus in September 1785, at the time that he was American Minister in London.

case was stated by the Commander-in-Chief, under whom they had fought three campaigns, and who requested to be informed why the youngest Brigadier in the service should be put over the heads of many gentlemen distinguished by sound judgment, and unquestionable bravery. "Colonel Conway's merit," so Washington went on to say, "and his importance in this army, exist more in his own imagination than in reality; for it is a maxim with him to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want anything which is to be obtained by importunity."<sup>1</sup> Washington, unlike his accusers and traducers, always signed his name at the foot of a letter; and he was aware that foes, as well as friends, would sooner or later know at least the substance of whatever he felt himself bound to write. The course which he took on this occasion was no secret to Conway, who resented it as all, except the magnanimous, resent public action which is unfavourable to their personal interest; and Conway was a dangerous man to have for an enemy.

In November, 1777, the superintendence of military affairs was vested in a Board of War constituted of persons not themselves members of Congress, but for the most part in close alliance with the ill-wishers of General Washington who had seats in that Assembly. The office, where this powerful conclave held its meetings, at once became an exchange-mart of slanderous gossip;—a sort of Venetian Lion's Mouth, standing open for the reception of denunciations pointed, one and all, at the same conspicuous citizen. The next three months produced a whole crop of venomous attacks upon Washington, unsigned and unsupported by evidence, which were addressed to, and sometimes emanated from, prominent delegates in Congress. One of the most outrageous of these diatribes was placed in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief by Patrick Henry, the Governor of Virginia. "The anonymous letter,"

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Richard Henry Lee, in Congress; Matuchen Hill, 17 October, 1777.

Washington replied, "with which you are pleased to favour me, was written by Doctor Rush, so far as I can judge from a similitude of hands. This man has been elaborate and studied in his professions of regard for me." The object of all this subterranean correspondence was to exalt Horatio Gates on the wreck of George Washington's reputation and influence. Gates owed the single military success of his life to Benedict Arnold; two years later on, when he encountered Lord Cornwallis at Camden in North Carolina, he evinced his hopeless incapacity as a leader in battle, and proved that he did not so much as possess the obligatory courage of a soldier; but, as the nominal victor of Saratoga, he served the immediate purpose of Washington's adversaries, and was loaded with compliments at Washington's expense. "We have had," (so Gates was told by one of his partisans,) "a noble army melted down by ill-judged marches, which disgrace their authors and directors. How much are you to be envied, my dear General! How different your conduct, and your fortune! This army will be totally lost, unless you come down and collect the virtuous band who wish to fight under your banner." "The Northern army," (said another admirer,) "has shown us what Americans are capable of doing with a *general* at their head. The spirit of the Southern army is in no way inferior. A Gates, a Lee, or a Conway would in a few weeks render them an irresistible body of men."

Washington was in a cruel plight. "My enemies," he said, "take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets which it is of the utmost value to conceal."<sup>1</sup> The plan adopted by Washington's opponents was to drench him with insults, and

<sup>1</sup> Washington to Henry Laurens, the President of Congress; Valley Forge, 31 January, 1778.

ill-services, until he should lose his self-control, and make some false step which they would take good care to render irretrievable. They had denied him reinforcements at the proper season for action; they had broken up the system of Transport and Commissariat which he had slowly and painfully constructed; and then, when his soldiers were spent by starvation and disease, they had publicly invited him to recommence operations in the depth of winter, and had thrown upon him, and upon the generals who were faithful to him, the responsibility of declining to attack Philadelphia under conditions which would be fatal to the American army. Notorious and implacable hostility to the Commander-in-Chief of the national forces was recognised as the special qualification for every office the holder of which would be in a position to annoy and thwart him. Conway was appointed Inspector General of the Army; Gates was brought down from Albany to York, and made President of the Board of War; and his confidential aide-de-camp, Colonel Wilkinson, became its Secretary. The managers of the Cabal had by this time ceased to be afraid of Washington. They regarded him as a proud and rigid man, who would not stoop to make a party for himself in the lobbies of a popular assembly, and whom nature had framed to be the victim in a conflict with antagonists who were less punctilious and chivalrous than himself. They looked forward to the moment when his place would be too hot for him; they were ready to pounce upon any expression of dissatisfaction proceeding from his pen which could be construed, or tortured, into a request to be relieved from office; and, when once he had been dismissed into private life, they felt assured that they would be quit of him for ever.

They had mistaken their man. George Washington, with right on his side, knew very well how to fight his own battles. He was pre-eminently a fair dealer; but, when liberties were taken with him, he more than once showed himself an exceedingly formi-

dable customer. Though he was indifferent to gain, and not covetous of glory, he had the strongest possible motive for remaining at the head of the army. He was firmly resolved, if the bullets spared him, to see his country safe through all her troubles; and he had no intention of allowing a pack of self-seekers and intriguers to hound him prematurely from the post of duty. He possessed no skill in plots and counter-plots, no aptitude for self-advertisement, and no inclination to the practice of disparaging and maligning others; but he had in store a resistless weapon which, in the last resort, he was entitled, and determined, to employ. Washington's strength lay in the trust and affection of the vast majority of his countrymen. Twice in the course of this very year, one of his most clever and bitter enemies confessed that the people of America adored the Commander-in-Chief, and were fully persuaded that the war could not be carried on without him.<sup>1</sup> He was admired by soldiers all the continent over, and passionately beloved by those who had faced danger, and who were now enduring the extremity of suffering, under his guidance, and in his company.<sup>2</sup> The feeling of the nation and the army towards Washington is described in a military report by a famous New England officer. General Knox was remarking upon the apprehension, entertained by some of his colleagues, that their chief would be harshly criticised if he did not consent to order an assault upon Sir William Howe's fortifications. "I have heard it urged," (Knox wrote,) "that your Excellency's reputation would suffer. I freely confess that an idea of this kind pains me exceedingly; and, were I fully to believe it, I should be impelled to give my opinion for measures as desperate as I conceive the attempt to

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Notes* of Doctor Benjamin Rush, for April and October,

1777.

<sup>2</sup> "The poor soldier," (wrote Doctor Waldo,) "ate his bad food with seeming content, and laboured barefoot through the mud and cold, with his shirt hanging about him in strings, and a song in his mouth extolling Washington."



storm Philadelphia. I am not of opinion that your Excellency's character suffers in the least with the well-affected part of the people of America. I know, to the contrary, that the people of America look up to you as their Father, and into your hands they trust their all, confident of every exertion on your part for their security and happiness; and I do not believe there is any man on earth for whose welfare there are more solicitations at the Court of Heaven than for yours."<sup>1</sup>

Washington's character, as he could not help being aware, stood so high that he would have no need whatever to defend himself, if once it was brought home to the public mind that he had been wantonly and ungenerously attacked. Fortified by this knowledge, he took the earliest opportunity that presented itself, and went straight to the point at once. Before many days passed, a despatch from the Commander-in-Chief was placed in the hands of General Gates, who opened it, and read as follows:

"SIR,

A letter, which I received last night, contained the following paragraph:

'In a letter from General Conway to General Gates he says, *Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak General and bad counsellors would have ruined it.*'

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON."

Conway had the grace to attempt no denial; but Gates discerned in the incident a chance of besmirching Washington, and tainting the fair fame of a distinguished young officer who was deep in Washington's confidence. The idea occurred to him that his desk had been searched, and rifled, by Alexander Hamilton,

<sup>1</sup> *Opinion of Brigadier General Knox*; Park of Artillery, Camp, Whitemarsh, 26th November, 1777.

during his recent visit to the Northern army. Gates accordingly began to bully and bluster, calling upon Washington, in a letter several pages long, to assist him in the detection and punishment of the wretch, the miscreant, and the traitorous thief, who had robbed his portfolio. He sent a duplicate of this extraordinary composition to the President of Congress; and it was through Congress that the Commander-in-Chief transmitted to him an unsealed reply, giving an exact account of all that had happened. The fact was that Colonel Wilkinson, — who stood in the same close relation to General Gates as Colonel Hamilton to General Washington, — had blabbed about Conway's letter to an officer of Lord Stirling's staff; and Stirling, by friendship and duty bound, had passed on the information to the Commander-in-Chief. It was a thunderstroke for Gates, who now saw the full extent of his own folly in having made the story public property by his appeal to Congress.<sup>1</sup> He returned Washington a shabby, and almost servile, answer; full of equivocal statements which nobody heeded at the time, and nobody has ever credited since; excusing himself and General Conway, and pouring contempt upon Colonel Wilkinson.<sup>2</sup> When that officer learned that he had been thrown over, he challenged Gates to mortal combat. A hostile meeting was arranged behind the Episcopal Church in York. "At the appointed hour, when all had arrived on the ground, the old general requested, through his second, an interview with his young antagonist; walked up a

<sup>1</sup> Washington took care to let Gates know that he had brought the exposure on himself. "Neither this letter," (he wrote,) "nor the information which occasioned it, was ever directly, or indirectly, communicated by me to a single officer in this army out of my own family, excepting the Marquis de Lafayette, who, (having been spoken to on the subject by General Conway,) applied for, and saw under injunctions of secrecy, the letter which contained Wilkinson's information." George Washington to Horatio Gates; Valley Forge, 4 January, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Two very different versions of this reply were printed and published. It has been suggested that one was the letter which actually reached Washington, and that Wilkinson copied the other from the original draft. There was matter for a duel in either of them.

back street with him; burst into tears; called him his dear boy; and denied that he ever made any injurious remarks about him."<sup>1</sup> The pistols were returned to their case, unused; but Colonel Wilkinson wrote to Congress, accusing Gates of falsehood and treachery, and resigning his own functions as Secretary to the Board of War.

The leaders of the baffled and detected faction had no time to lose. In another fortnight the story would have travelled all over the Confederacy, and their credit and authority would be swept away in a flood of ridicule and public indignation. They seized, as their last chance, on an ingenious scheme for wounding Washington in the house of his friends. The Marquis de Lafayette had long ago re-appeared in camp, making very light of the hurt which he had received at Brandywine. He was the most popular and cheerful of invalids, and prouder of his first wound than if he had been decorated by his Sovereign with the Cross of Saint Louis. Washington had desired his physician to treat the young man as his own son; and he was tended with motherly and sisterly care by the German ladies of Bethlehem. The Moravian Brothers discoursed to him about the folly of war, and were touched and flattered by the interest with which he contrived to read an English translation of the Narrative of their Greenland Mission. Lafayette missed Germantown; but he was back again with the army, and on horseback, while still unable to wear a boot. General Greene entrusted him with a detachment of troops, at the head of which he fought a spirited and successful action against a superior force of Hessians, and earned warm praises from the Commander-in-Chief. Lafayette had found his hero in Washington; but, aristocrat and idealist that he was, he did not feel himself attracted or fascinated

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is extracted from the vivid and circumstantial account given in Mr. Fiske's Ninth Chapter. The whole correspondence may be found in the Sixth Appendix to the Fifth Volume of *The Writings of George Washington*.

by the clique of wire-pullers who governed Congress. "I see plainly," (he wrote to Washington,) "that America can defend herself, if proper measures are taken; but I begin to fear that she may be lost by herself and her own sons." Washington thanked him for his sympathy, and bade him be of good heart and courage. "We must not," he said, "in so great a contest, expect nothing but sunshine. I have no doubt that everything happens for the best, that we shall triumph over our misfortunes, and in the end be happy; and then, my dear Marquis, if you will give me your company in Virginia, we will laugh at our past difficulties, and the folly of others."<sup>1</sup>

The two friends were sitting together in Washington's quarters, on an evening towards the end of January, 1778, when a packet of documents arrived from the Board of War. The older man read the papers, and then passed them over to his companion without a word. They contained Lafayette's nomination to the independent command of the Northern army, with Conway as his chief lieutenant; and the Marquis was directed to repair to the seat of government, in order to concert arrangements for an immediate invasion of Canada. The cup of temptation was exquisitely adapted to the taste of him for whose acceptance it had been compounded. Such a chance, at such a time of life, had never fallen to one who was not a monarch, or, at the very least, a prince of royal blood. Lafayette was still under one-and-twenty,—hardly older than Charles the Twelfth when he stormed the Russian camp at Narva, and younger than the Great Condé at the battle of Rocroi. His lively imagination could easily picture to itself the outburst of pride and enthusiasm with which Paris would learn the news that a high-born French youth had avenged Montcalm, and had been welcomed by his countrymen in Canada as their deliverer

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Lafayette to General Washington; Camp, 30 December, 1777. General Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette; Headquarters, 31 December, 1777.

from the British yoke. It was a glittering web of romance and glory; and yet there was a seamy side to the tapestry. Lafayette shrank from the thought of entering upon a career of ambition as the rival, and the possible supplanter, of his patron and benefactor. He announced his intention of declining the appointment; but Washington urged, and at last positively insisted, that he should at once close with the offer. The Marquis accordingly set out for York, where he was received with open arms. Gates entertained him at a banquet which appeared almost sinfully profuse and luxurious to a guest who had come direct from the famine at Valley Forge. Wine and words flowed copiously; and the expected conqueror of Canada was congratulated and belauded by eloquent civilians of twice his years, and by generals who could harangue much better than they fought. The young nobleman confined his own remarks to practical business. He firmly, but quietly, let it be known that he should exercise his functions in strict subordination to General Washington, and that no consideration would induce him to accept Conway as his second in command. When the time for departure approached he rose to his feet, reminded the company that the most important of all the toasts had been omitted in the generous excitement of the hour, and gave the health of the Commander-in-Chief. A dead silence fell upon the audience. Glasses were raised to the lips, and set down untasted, while "with the politest of bows, and a scarcely perceptible shrug of the shoulders, the new Commander of the Northern Army left the room, and mounted his horse to start for his headquarters at Albany."<sup>1</sup>

The conspirators, — unlike Cassius and Casca in the Second Act of Shakespeare's tragedy, — had knocked at the wrong door in their search for an accomplice. Lafayette made it very clear to them that he had no

<sup>1</sup> Ninth Chapter of Fiske's *History. Life of General Lafayette*, by Bayard Tuckerman. *Mémoires de ma main; jusqu'en l'année 1780, du Général Lafayette.*



intention of playing Marcus Brutus to Washington's Julius Cæsar. Their designs had been penetrated; their secret machinations had been dragged into the daylight; and America learned, for the first time, how near she had come to exchanging the disinterested services of George Washington, and Robert Morris, for the egotism and impotence of Horatio Gates, and Benjamin Rush. The Republic, (as every man of sense now recognised with something of a shudder,) had been threatened by a calamity more serious than the loss of half a score of pitched battles. Conway's Cabal became a by-word in all the States, and Conway himself soon disappeared from American history. In the course of the spring he was appointed to a post which did not please his fancy, and he sent in his resignation to the President of Congress in a petulant letter.<sup>1</sup> Much to his surprise and anger, he was promptly taken at his word, and relieved from duty. He loitered about in Pennsylvanian society, an idle and disappointed man; giving, to all and sundry, his own version of what had taken place during the winter, and girding at the Commander-in-Chief in a tone which already was hopelessly out of date. The style of his talk was too much for the patience of General Cadwalader, a Philadelphian of hot Welsh blood, who had fought in most of Washington's battles, and had no fault to find with Washington's leadership. The two officers celebrated their next Fourth of July by a desperate duel; and Conway was shot through the face. Lying on what he believed to be his death-bed, he wrote to Washington an assurance of his "sincere grief" for his past conduct. "My career," he continued, "will soon be over: therefore justice and truth

<sup>1</sup> "I have been boxed about in the most indecent manner. . . . What is the meaning of removing me from the scene of action on the opening of a campaign? I did not deserve this burlesque disgrace; and my honour will not permit me to bear it. If my services are not thought necessary, why do you not mention it to me fairly?" General Conway to President Laurens; Fishkill, April 22nd, 1778.

prompt me to declare my last sentiments. You are in my eyes the great and good man. May you long enjoy the love, veneration, and esteem of the States, whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues!"<sup>1</sup>

Washington had made a *coup d'état* after his own fashion. He did not over-ride the Constitution, or perpetrate a single act of arbitrary and illegal violence. Nobody was arrested, or imprisoned, or deported. There were no military demonstrations in the streets, and no intrusion of the soldiery into the precincts of the senate-house. A few strong, plain words, spoken at the right moment and in the right quarter, had roused the nation to a sense of its peril, and had brought all his enemies to his feet. The most damaging accusation which, for many years to come, could be hurled against any leading politician, was that he had taken part in the attack upon George Washington. It was long remembered to the disadvantage of General Mifflin that he had consented to sit upon the Board of War; and John Adams himself was taught by a disagreeable experience that, when he carped at the foremost man in America, he had been playing with edged tools.<sup>2</sup> The defeat of Conway's Cabal marked a distinct and visible step in Washington's upward progress. His authority thenceforward stood on a more elevated and solid pedestal than it had ever occupied before. "As the silly intrigues against him recoiled upon their authors, men began to realise that it was far more upon his consummate sagacity, and unselfish patriotism, than any-

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Conway to George Washington; Philadelphia, 23 July, 1778. Conway eventually recovered from his wound. He returned to France, and was appointed Governor of the French settlements in Hindostan, "where, however, his imprudence is said to have greatly injured the French cause. In 1793 he was in charge of the Royalist army in the South of France, but was driven from that country, and died in exile in 1800." Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence*; Note on page 202 of Volume II.

<sup>2</sup> "That insolent blasphemer of things sacred, and transcendent libeller of all that is good, Tom Paine, has more than once asserted in print that I was one of a faction, in the Fall of the year 1777, against General Washington." *Autobiography of John Adams*.

thing Congress could do, that the country rested its hopes of success in the great enterprise which it had undertaken."<sup>1</sup> The power, which Washington forebore to snatch, fell into his grasp easily, and almost automatically. No one ever again openly disputed, and very few even privately questioned, that he, and he alone, united the qualities and the attributes which were essential to the general and statesman who was to save America.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is taken from the closing paragraph of Mr. Fiske's Ninth Chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The collapse of the opposition to Washington is depicted in a letter from Conway to Gates, written at York in June, 1778. "I had never," (said Conway,) "a sufficient idea of cabals until I reached this place. My reception, as you may imagine, was not a warm one. . . . Mr. Carroll, from Maryland, upon whose friendship I depended, is one of the hottest of the cabal. He told me a few days ago, almost literally, that anybody who displeased, or did not admire, the Commander-in-Chief, ought not to be kept in the army."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THROUGH SPRING TO SUMMER. PHILADELPHIA BECOMES UNTENABLE

THE first step towards saving America was to preserve the lives, and rebuild the health, of her soldiers; and all eyes were turned to George Washington as the prime agent in that vital process. Congress, sincerely repentant, besought him in forcible language to exert the dictatorial powers with which he was liberally invested. Even his personal enemies welcomed his acceptance of authority as a relief and protection to themselves. The troops, and more especially the Virginians, were loud in blame of Horatio Gates, and of his allies and abettors within the walls of Congress. Even Colonels, (we are told,) spoke of them with the greatest contempt and detestation; and every class of officials, who were entrusted with the supply of food and clothing, "shared largely in the profusion of curses and ill-will of the camp."<sup>1</sup> The political generals on the Board of War ceased to trifle with duties which they had made no serious attempt to master, and left the ground clear for the only living man who could stand between them and their immense unpopularity.

Washington flung himself with eagerness into his difficult and urgent task; acting through the civil power wherever it was practicable, and, when time pressed, doing the work of the moment according to his own lights, and on his own responsibility. A Committee of Congress, under his inspiration, circulated an appeal for help to all the States of the Union;<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> *Diary of Major Clark*, for January 1778; as quoted by Louis Clinton Hatch in *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Papers of George Clinton*; Volume II., page 766.

in the meanwhile the Commander-in-Chief fearlessly resorted to the strong hand in order to save his army from immediate dissolution. On the seventh February he commissioned his ablest lieutenants to ransack the whole area from which the British Commissariat officers drew supplies for the garrison of Philadelphia. Nathanael Greene collected many waggon-loads of grain, and all the cattle, sheep, and swine, which were fit for killing, between the Schuylkill and the Brandywine Rivers; compensating the owners with promissory notes which in due time were paid, to the uttermost cent, by the loyal exertions of Robert Morris. Wayne fought and foraged in Pennsylvania, and afterwards in New Jersey, with so much success that he was soon familiarly known as "Wayne the Drover." The Loyalists adopted and used that nickname for purposes of contumely;<sup>1</sup> but it had its origin in the gratitude of the haggard and tattered crowd which watched Anthony Wayne ride into camp at Valley Forge behind a great herd of fat bullocks. Greene wrote, in a private letter, that Washington's soldiers had been a full week without receiving a single ration. "They came," (he said,) "before their superior officers, and told their sufferings in as respectful terms as if they had been humble petitioners for special favours. Happily, relief arrived from the little collections I had made, and some others, and prevented the army from disbanding."

Washington's station in society, and his vocation in life, had prepared him for the emergency which he was now called upon to meet. The owner of a Southern plantation, living in a region of primitive

<sup>1</sup> Major André's last literary production, — entitled *The Cow Chase, a satirical poem*, — was sent to press the evening before the author started from New York on his fatal mission. The concluding stanza ran as follows:

"And now I've closed my epic strain.  
I tremble, as I show it,  
Lest this same warrior-drover Wayne  
Should ever catch the poet."

The verses appeared in Rivington's Gazette on the day that André was arrested by the American volunteers at Tarrytown.



communications and vast self-supporting estates, was trained to foresight, industry, method, and self-reliance from early youth upwards. "As the plantation," we are told, "was the centre of the economic interests of the country, so the planter was the most important individual in the community. In his own domain his word was supreme law, and his wishes were the governing influence. The country was thus provided with a circle of men who showed unusual ability in public administration. They had been brought up to headship and leadership, and accustomed to the most important duties of practical management."<sup>1</sup> In the arts of peace,—in the orderly, equable, and successful conduct of an immense rural and industrial establishment,—Washington had been conspicuous among his fellows. He could turn his hands to many sorts of work. He had been used to superintend the manufacture, on a large scale, of all requisites and appliances for rural labour and portage, and to arrange for the daily sustenance of a multitude of men and animals.<sup>2</sup> He had learned to choose qualified subordinates in various departments of business, and to recognise and trust a good man when he had found one. And now, in the early spring of 1778, as soon as the crying needs of his soldiers had been temporarily satisfied, he took practical and well-considered measures for preventing any recurrence of the administrative scandals and calamities which had marked the previous winter. In concert with an excellent Committee, appointed by Congress to assist him in the reorganisation of the army, he once more set up an efficient

<sup>1</sup> Extract from an article on Virginia in an American periodical.

<sup>2</sup> "I rose early, and took a walk about the General's grounds, which are really beautifully laid out. He has about four thousand acres well cultivated, and superintends the whole himself. Indeed, his great pride now is to be thought the first farmer in America. . . . It is astonishing what a number of small houses the General has upon his estate for his different workmen and negroes to live in. He has everything within himself,—Carpenters, Bricklayers, Brewers, Blacksmiths, Bakers; and even has a well-assorted Store for the use of his family and Servants." *Diary of John Hunter*; Mount Vernon, November 17, 1785.

machinery of supply and transport. Colonel Wadsworth of Connecticut, a man of solid ability and tried integrity, was placed over the Commissariat; and General Greene, in response to Washington's earnest solicitation, accepted the thankless post of Quartermaster General.<sup>1</sup> Never was a duty more reluctantly assumed, and more faithfully and effectually performed. Greene believed himself to be renouncing the ambition of a lifetime when he retired from his place in the fighting line. History, (he pathetically exclaimed,) had never heard of a Quartermaster. In his case, however, patriotism and self-abnegation were destined to be splendidly rewarded. Nathanael Greene's experience, during the next two years, in the intricate details of military administration, was of incalculable service to him throughout that magnificent campaign of forced marches, and furious battles, by which he recovered for the Republic three of the Southern States, and inscribed his own name next to that of Washington on the roll of famous Revolutionary generals.

The new officials attacked their work on system. General Greene, in consultation with the Commander-in-Chief and Commissary Wadsworth, made an estimate of the food and forage which would suffice an army of thirty thousand men for a period of twelve months.<sup>2</sup> He established half a dozen principal magazines at carefully selected points along the Delaware River. He secured a vast quantity of horses for the Artillery and Transport. He saw that the streams were bridged and the highways in repair, and that the waggons were very numerous, and in working order. He insisted that the carters and teamsters should be fairly remunerated, and humanely treated; and in his dealings with farmers, tradespeople, and mechanics he displayed the justice and the fellow-

<sup>1</sup> "I hate the place," (so Greene wrote to Knox;) "but I hardly know what to do. The General is afraid that the department will be so ill-managed, unless some of his friends undertake it, that the operations of the next campaign will be in a great measure frustrated."

<sup>2</sup> Washington computed his annual requirements at two hundred thousand barrels of flour, and forty million pounds of meat.

feeling which might be expected from a man who himself had always wrought hard for a livelihood.<sup>1</sup> When the summer was half over, Washington told the President of Congress that, thanks to General Greene's active and judicious management, he himself had been enabled, with great facility and on the shortest notice, to move an army, half again as large as that which fought at Brandywine, across a hundred miles of country in rapid pursuit of the enemy. Colonel Wadsworth, (the Commander-in-Chief added,) had been indefatigable in his exertions, and, since his appointment to the post of Commissary General, the supplies of provisions had been good and ample.<sup>2</sup>

Hard times became a thing of the past at Valley Forge. In December 1777 Field-officers had kept Thanksgiving Day on a morsel of "exceeding poor" meat, without flour or biscuit.<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 1778 the allowance served out to every private was a pound and a half of bread; a pound of beef, or fish, or pork and beans; and a gill of whiskey. The regimental doctors, practitioners of the old school, could once again exhibit their favourite remedy of "mutton and grog."<sup>4</sup> The cheeks of the young soldiers filled out, their arms recovered muscle, and their step regained its spring; while the invalids who had survived the winter came back to the ranks by hundreds. The return of warm weather brought once more into evidence those of the regimental chaplains who, during the extreme cold, had gone home to their native States on a theory that the men at Valley Forge were too poorly clad to stand in the open air, and listen to preaching. One of them was told by a soldier that he, and his comrades,

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Nathanael Greene*; Book II., Chapter I. "Before I came into the Department," (Greene wrote,) "the country had been plundered in a way that would now breed a kind of civil war between the Staff and the inhabitants."

<sup>2</sup> Washington to the President of Congress; Whiteplains, New York, August 3, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of Henry Dearborn.*

<sup>4</sup> *Doctor Albigenice Waldo's Diary.*

had sadly missed the hearing of the sermon on a Sunday. The Reverend gentleman explained that it was their comfort which he had in mind when he discontinued the practice of public worship. "That is true," was the answer; "but it would have been consoling to have had so good a man among us." Deeply touched, the clergyman reported the conversation to General Van Cortlandt, who asked to have the soldier pointed out, and identified him as the most notorious probrate in the whole battalion.<sup>1</sup>

A break-up of winter always refilled the American regiments; and, in April and May 1778, the outburst of personal loyalty to Washington, which was evoked by the disclosure of Conway's Cabal, gave a notable impulse to the recruiting. The event of Saratoga had made the Northern and Eastern States safe for ever and a day. The fighting men of those districts were no longer needed for the defence of their own firesides; and New Englanders rallied in great numbers round the banner of the only general, born outside New England, whom they deemed worthy to command them. They flocked into camp, as fast as Colonel Wadsworth could get beef to feed them; strapping sinewy lads, — Asas, and Ephraims, and Jonadabs, and Abijahs,<sup>2</sup> — astonishing the foreign officers by their skill in the most essential accomplishment of a soldier. The Chevalier de Fleury reported to his government that the American recruit was a different being from a French peasant, who never killed a hare or a partridge without imminent danger of being sent to the galleys as a poacher. Every farmer's son in the States, (he said,) knew the use of a fowling-piece; and not a few of them were veterans, little as they looked the part. "The recruits," wrote Lafayette,

<sup>1</sup> *Philip Van Cortlandt's Biography*; quoted in *The Private Soldier under Washington*, Chapter 6.

<sup>2</sup> In a very strong company, which marched from Lincoln in Massachusetts to the Battle of Lexington, every minute-man had a Christian, — or, more strictly speaking, a Biblical, — name taken out of Old Testament history.

"have in many cases fought in the same regiments which they are rejoining, and have seen more shots fired than three out of four soldiers in Europe."

Soldiers, in the European sense of the term, the American infantrymen were not. Perfection of drill was unattainable in an army which, ever since it assembled on Cambridge Common in the spring of 1775, had been harried about, from pillar to post, up and down five hundred miles of country between the River St. Lawrence and Chesapeake Bay. The individual private in the Continental ranks was ill set up; he went through his manual exercise like a rustic sportsman rather than a professional musketeer; and the evolutions, which he and his comrades performed in common, were to the last degree rudimentary. Little care had been bestowed on tactical efficiency, and the decorative side of war received no attention whatever. The smaller men were placed in the front line; but otherwise the soldiers were not even ranged in order of stature. Lafayette, coming straight from the parades of the Royal Household at Versailles, stood gazing in courteous silence while an American regiment took ground to its right "by an eternal countermarch commencing on the left flank."<sup>1</sup> The same operation, attempted a few weeks afterwards in the hurry of battle, contributed largely to the disorderly rout of Sullivan's division at Brandywine.

A most curious account of the American officers at Valley Forge has been given by an acute, but not unfriendly, witness. The Baron de Kalb, an Alsatian by birth, had done long and useful service in the administrative departments of the French army. Towards the close of the Seven Years' War the Duc de Choiseul despatched him with a secret commission to inquire into the political tendencies, and the fighting power, of the British colonies in America. De Kalb was better acquainted than most of Washington's generals with the military resources of their own

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires du Général Lafayette.*



country, and he spoke their language at least as well as any German immigrant of the second generation. He came across the Atlantic once again in the same ship as Lafayette, and had a cordial reception from Congress. The Commander-in-Chief, as de Kalb acknowledged with becoming gratitude, made up for him "a division of two brigades, New Englanders all, and reputed to be the best troops in the army." De Kalb was no vulgar mercenary. Though now verging on seventy, he had the health which comes from rigid temperance; and his activity was still such that his new comrades took him to be under fifty. He was, however, long past the age when a man can take pleasure in expatriation; and he continued to wear the blue and buff uniform from no lower motive than a sincere belief that he could be more useful to his own Sovereign in America than in France. His pay, always in arrear, was in paper-money at a discount of four hundred per cent; and yet he thankfully acknowledged that America had made him welcome to the utmost of her ability, and he requited her with the best which he had to give. In the decisive and terrible charge of the British infantry at the battle of Camden, when Horatio Gates ran, de Kalb died sword in hand, with eleven bayonet-thrusts in his body.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the American generals had conceived a most exaggerated notion of their own importance and dignity. They had read in French and Austrian gazettes about the pomp and privilege which surrounded the military hierarchy in an ancient and monarchical country; and their vanity was encouraged by those pretentious impostors whom Silas Deane had sent across the ocean as samples of all that was most worthy of imitation in the European armies. On Christmas day Baron de Kalb transmitted to the Comte de Broglie a melancholy report of the distress which already pre-

<sup>1</sup> In January, 1855, Congress paid Baron de Kalb's great-grandchildren his arrears in full, both principal and interest. Three quarters of a century had brought up the total sum to sixty-six thousand dollars.

vailed among the soldiers at Valley Forge. "The generals, on their part," he wrote, "do not spare them, but take the whole guard assigned to their rank;—the Major Generals a lieutenant and thirty men, the Brigadiers a sergeant and twelve men, and the Colonels and Captains in proportion. The lowest General has a Commissary, (whom he selects where he pleases,) a Quartermaster, a Transport Officer, and three Commissioners of Forage. These all have military rank. My farrier is a captain. The day before yesterday I went on duty. The general, who relieved me, asked if I had paraded the men the evening before. I told him that I never would add to the misery of the soldier by keeping him under arms without necessity. It has been cold for a month; and they are so slow in mustering that that alone consumes nearly two hours. The general, however, sent for all his drummers and had a Grand Parade, and a March Past, lasting three quarters of an hour. It is a pity that soldiers, so submissive, and of such excellent qualities, should be so little cared for."

Every foreigner, whose favourable opinion was worth having, admired the courage, virtue, and patriotism which very generally animated the commissioned ranks in Washington's army. Many who in private life had been captains of industry, or active members of a learned profession, now gave their whole mind to the business of soldiering, and had by this time sedulously trained themselves into good regimental officers.<sup>1</sup> They needed to be conscientious and public-spirited, for they were not kept in order from above. A man, who had no self-respect, might play the shirker and the coward unpunished, and even unrebuked. "An officer," said de Kalb, "at the moment of an engagement quits his regiment; tells his commandant,—or does not tell

<sup>1</sup> "The Continental troops are not the Rouergue Regiment; but neither are they the citizen militia of Paris at the time of the Fronde. . . . Civilians, who had intelligence, have applied it to the military art. Farmers and merchants have become passable officers." *Official Report by the Chevalier de Fleury.*

him, as the case may be, — that he has business elsewhere; and remains away in a neighbouring town until the affair is over. Nobody says anything to him; he is paid his emoluments as before; and he will do the same thing again on the first opportunity. There are some who have acted on this plan ever since the war commenced.”<sup>1</sup> De Kalb himself attributed the abuses in the American army to the meddling of Congress, and saw no hope of improvement except in the vigorous interposition of the Commander-in-Chief. “General Washington,” said the old Alsatian, “is the most valiant and upright man. I am convinced that he would do good if he took more upon himself in the future than he has taken in the past.”

Congress had now burned its fingers, and had ceased to meddle; and the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, so far as purely military matters were concerned, became little or nothing short of absolute. He had a free hand, and the leisure to use it. His own intrenchments at Valley Forge defied assault; and he could not attempt anything with advantage against Sir William Howe as long as the British troops lay secure behind their line of forts, and the British fleet had control of the Delaware River. For the first time since Washington had taken over the command, he saw an opportunity for getting his army into shape. If any European nation really existed whose example might be quoted in excuse for the irregularities and absurdities which prevailed in the American camp, that nation most assuredly was not Prussia; and exactly at the right moment a Prussian veteran appeared upon the scene. Baron von Steuben had served with King Frederic’s staff in every campaign of the Seven Years’ War; and, since the Peace of Hubertsburg, he had lived on his estate in Suabia when-

<sup>1</sup> A familiar type, during the first thirty months of the Revolutionary war, was the officer who remained away from the front, haunting the taverns of Albany and Boston for weeks together, bragging about his own performances under fire, and wearing his hat at the angle known in the British army as “the damn-my-eyes cock.”

ever he was not occupied with the duties of those lucrative, and very incongruous, employments which a German nobleman might hold in the easy days of the pre-Revolutionary epoch. He was Lieutenant General in the Baden army, and Grand Marshal at the court of the Prince of Hohenzollern Hechingen; a knight of the Order of Fidelity; and, (among his other vocations,) a canon of the Church. The King of Sardinia, and the Emperor of Austria, had endeavoured to attract him by splendid offers; but he had his own political opinions, and was silently determined never to draw his sword again except in the cause of liberty.

Von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge in February 1778, and was soon afterwards appointed Inspector General of the Army in place of Conway, who had made the post a sinecure. On reaching his quarters the Baron found an officer and twenty-five men stationed at the door as a guard of honour, whom he promptly sent about their business. His next step was to draft six or seven score of soldiers, from various line battalions, as a body-guard for the Commander-in-Chief; and then he proceeded, in the old Potsdam style, to put this detachment through the Potsdam discipline. He rose at three every morning; drank his coffee, and smoked his pipe; and got on horseback by sunrise. He was, (we are told,) an ardent advocate of direct personal contact between officer and private, and had no patience with the British custom of making over the awkward squad to sergeants.<sup>1</sup> He might constantly be seen in face of a line of soldiers, with a semicircle of captains and lieutenants behind him, giving the word of command, short and sharp, and going through the motions with a musket. At first he delivered his instructions with an interpreter at his side, who, according to the military legend, was particularly enjoined to swear at delinquents in their mother tongue; but von Steuben very soon contrived to make himself understood when

<sup>1</sup> *The Private Soldier under Washington*; Chapter 1.

he had anything of importance to communicate.<sup>1</sup> Within a fortnight, (according to his own statement,) his company "were perfect in their manual exercise; had acquired a military air; and knew how to march, to form column, to deploy, and to execute some little manœuvres with admirable precision." Then he took another batch in hand, and sent back their predecessors to be teachers and fuglemen in their respective regiments throughout the army. Before many weeks had elapsed the President of Congress received a most reassuring letter from his son at Valley Forge. "Baron Steuben," wrote Colonel Laurens, "is making sensible progress with our soldiers. The officers seem to have a high opinion of him, and discover a docility from which we may augur the most happy effects. It would enchant you to see the enlivened scene of our Campus Martius. If Mr. Howe opens the campaign with his usual deliberation, we shall be infinitely better prepared to meet him than ever we have been."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Howe and Sir Henry Clinton, between them, gave von Steuben all the spring, and half the summer, to complete the task which he had undertaken; and the American soldier thenceforward superadded an exact discipline to the cleverness of his nation, and the courage of his race. No more thorough a piece of work, in that department of human affairs, was ever again accomplished until Sir John Moore formed and trained for battle, at the camp of Shorncliffe, the regiments which will always be known to fame as Lord Wellington's Light Division.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Von Steuben learned to talk vigorous English, and the anecdote-books are full of his sayings. When a shell fell near him at Yorktown, he jumped into a trench, followed closely by Anthony Wayne, who tumbled over him. Perceiving that it was his own Brigadier, the Baron said: "I always knew you were a brave officer, but I did not know you were so perfect in every point of duty. You cover your general's retreat in the best manner possible."

<sup>2</sup> John Laurens to Henry Laurens; Headquarters, Valley Forge, April 1, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> During the three earliest years of the war from five to eight thousand American muskets had disappeared annually. Most of them were carried away as keepsakes by departing soldiers. It was a custom which would



Von Steuben was remoulding the infantry; General Knox could be trusted to restore the efficiency of the artillery; and Washington himself took measures to remedy the most glaring of all the defects in the composition of his army. If he had begun the campaign with a respectable force of cavalry, numerous enough to cover his own front and watch the movements of the enemy, his advance-guard need never have been surprised at Paoli, and even Brandywine might have told another tale. Such a force the Commander-in-Chief now made it his special business to create. Everything which concerned the enlistment, the equipment, and, (above all,) the mounting of his troopers was a labour of love, performed in congenial company. Major Henry Lee was a young man of high promise, and the son of an old flame of George Washington, who had been early, and always, susceptible to the gentle passion until his affections were irrevocably fixed by marriage. Already known for a dashing leader of partisans, Henry Lee soon reached supremacy in every branch of soldier-ship; and in his late manhood he became the father of a hero who holds rank among the very greatest soldiers of the modern world.<sup>1</sup> He was a native of Washington's own county, — a brother Virginian with whom, when the day's work was done, the General liked well to sit, and talk horses.<sup>2</sup> Major Lee enrolled, and commanded, two troops of light dragoons; and a third troop was added before operations recommenced. The American

not have endeared itself to Frederic the Great; and, in the first twelve months of von Steuben's Inspectorship, fewer than twenty fire-arms were lost to the nation. Fiske's *Revolution*; Chapter X.

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Lee, the Confederate general, was born when Henry Lee was long past fifty.

<sup>2</sup> "I found," wrote Stuart the artist, "that it was difficult to interest Washington in conversation while I was taking his portrait. I began on the Revolution, — the battles of Monmouth and Princeton; but he was absolutely dumb. After a while I got on horses. I had touched the right chord." Washington was then President of the United States, and residing in Philadelphia, where he had a stable of six and twenty. He used to say that he asked but one good quality in a horse, *to go along*; for he could always keep his saddle, provided the animal kept upon its legs.

cavalry had small beginnings, and never attained very large dimensions; but it was a serviceable instrument of war from the first moment, and ultimately it played a memorable part in deciding the campaign which preserved Georgia and the Carolinas to the Union.

Before Lafayette was many weeks older he returned to Valley Forge, disgusted and disillusioned. He had informed his wife, with pardonable exultation, that he had been appointed to the independent command of a small but sufficient army, and honoured by a mission to liberate New France from British oppression.<sup>1</sup> The bastard soldiers on the Board of War, whose one and only object was to sow jealousy between him and Washington, and who had made no preparations whatever for an attack upon Canada, had told the Marquis that he would have at his disposal at least three thousand good troops, equipped for a winter march. Horatio Gates expressly assured him that General Stark had called out the New England militia, and would by that time have destroyed the hostile flotilla at St. John's in the Sorel River. When Lafayette arrived at Albany he found just twelve hundred ill-fed, unpaid, and half-naked soldiers; and the Green Mountain Boys, like people of sense, flatly refused to stir from home. The plain truth was, that Stark, and all his New Hampshiremen, infinitely preferred the English to the French as their neighbours on the other side of the border. A handful of Quebec Whigs, with the inveterate and incurable self-deception of the political exile, promised the young Frenchman that, as soon as ever he crossed the frontier, the Canadians would rise to a man against King George and his government. But Benedict Arnold and Benjamin Lincoln wrote from their sick-beds to remonstrate against the proposed expedition. The views of those admirable soldiers were enforced by the sound judgment, and the unequalled local knowledge, of Philip Schuyler; and Congress, in terms handsomely chosen to show their sympathy with Lafayette under his disappointment,

<sup>1</sup> Lafayette à Madame Lafayette; Yorck, 3 Février, 1778.

ordered him to suspend his northward movement, and rejoin Washington's army.

The Americans had been wise in time. A very warm reception was awaiting them in Canada, where Sir Guy Carleton had assembled all the British and German regiments, and had concentrated them in an advanced position at the actual point of danger. They were at liberty to bestow their undistracted attention upon the invader; for the French inhabitants were tranquil and contented, and by no means unfriendly to their rulers. Carleton's habitual respect for their religion, their language, and their social institutions, and the vigilance with which he suppressed every attempt to insult or ill-use them, had won their affection for himself, and secured their loyalty to the Crown. When the peril was over he sailed for England, superseded from office, and in disgrace, — as far as an honest man could be disgraced by incurring the displeasure of such a minister as Lord George Germaine. Sir Guy Carleton had saved Canada by pursuing the exact reverse, in every particular, of the infatuated policy which alienated, and lost to the empire, our thirteen American colonies.

In the course of that same spring Charles Lee returned to the Republican lines from an exceedingly uncomfortable captivity. Sir William Howe had threatened to try him by Court Martial as a deserter. When he wrote to expostulate, his letters were sent back to him unopened, and enclosed in an envelope addressed not to "General Lee," not even to "Charles Lee, Esquire," but bearing the ominous superscription of "Lieutenant Colonel Lee," which was his rank in the British service. He had been placed under close arrest, and perhaps was only saved from a worse fate by the emphasis of Washington's remonstrances. His fellow-countrymen, alarmed for his safety, made repeated efforts to have him included in the negotiations for a barter of prisoners. Congress was prepared to bid as high for him as five Hessian field-officers, with an English colonel thrown in; and he was eventually

released in exchange for a warrior who, it must be admitted, very fairly represented Charles Lee's genuine market value. General Prescott had, twice over and very easily, been made prisoner by the Americans, who came to regard him as a convenient circulating medium for buying back their own captured generals.<sup>1</sup> Towards the middle of April, Lee arrived at York, on a very bad horse, with his vanity still as alert, and his literary style as eccentric, as ever. He wrote to Washington that he had lately been studying Marshal Saxe and Machiavel's Institutions, and that he now understood the art of drawing up an army in the field better than almost any man living. "In short," he said, "I am mounting on a hobby-horse of my own training, and it runs away with me. You must excuse me, therefore, if I could not forbear recommending the beast to some members of Congress." Washington took this communication very lightly. He congratulated Lee on his restoration to freedom, and thanked him for his letter. "The contents," he added, "shall be the subject of conversation when I have the pleasure of seeing you in circumstances to mount your hobby-horse; which will not, I hope, on trial be found quite so limping a jade as the one on which you set out for York."<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Washington had joined her husband at Valley Forge before the worst period of misery was over. Like Frederic the Great, during his seven years of marches and bivouacs, George Washington never once visited his home until the war was concluded; but, unlike that monarch, he had a wife whose companionship was

<sup>1</sup> Prescott, early in the war, when attacked by Richard Montgomery on the river St. Lawrence, had tamely surrendered himself, a detachment of British soldiers, and eleven armed vessels for the safety of which he was responsible. He was exchanged for Sullivan, and placed in command on Rhode Island, whence he was taken out of his bed by a party of American raiders, and carried to the mainland in his night shirt. Prescott is remembered as a tyrannical, violent-tempered man,—a terror to the revolted colonists everywhere except in battle. He was in all respects a different personage from Robert Prescott, then a colonel in Howe's army, afterwards a general of renown, and a humane and capable administrator.

<sup>2</sup> Washington to Charles Lee; Valley Forge, 22 April, 1778.

essential to his happiness, and who was not kept from his side by any consideration of danger to herself. She said on one occasion that she always heard the first, and the last, guns of every campaign;<sup>1</sup> and now, by the middle of February, she was settled in the old Quaker's stone house at the angle between the ravine and the river. "The General's apartment," she wrote, "is very small. He has had a log cabin built to dine in, which has made our quarters much more tolerable than they were at first." The cabin has disappeared; but the house remains, with two little ground-floor rooms, and a deep east window, beneath the sill of which is a cavity where Washington kept his secret papers. Many years afterwards an ancient lady who, as a girl of sixteen, attended Mrs. Washington on her errands of mercy in that camp of sorrow, used to say that she had never known so busy a woman. During the whole of every week-day her sitting-room was filled with the wives of officers, patching garments, knitting stockings, and cutting out shirts, for the soldiers; and she herself, in the intervals of her needle-work, was continually to be seen entering the regimental huts with a basket on her arm, to comfort the sick with wholesome food prepared by her own hands, or to pray "in a sweet solemn voice" beside the straw pallets of the dying.<sup>2</sup>

When times mended, and a rude abundance prevailed in the cantonments, Washington, who had the planter's inclination to hospitality, began once more to keep open house for as many guests as his dining-shed would accommodate.<sup>3</sup> It was not a stiff or a silent meal; for his "family," as he called them, were a vivacious crew. Alexander Hamilton carved at the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Catherine Schuyler*, by Mary Gay Humphreys; Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Martha Washington*, by Anne Hollingsworth Wharton; Chapter 7.

<sup>3</sup> From the moment that the war ended there was a constant stream of visitors at Mount Vernon. The master of the house "recorded, as a noteworthy fact, after they had been at home more than a year, that for the first time he and Mrs. Washington dined alone."



head of the table, leading the laughter, and providing, in very superior quality, the homage which lady-guests have a right to expect in a military household; while Baron von Steuben, whom the aides-de-camp venerated as a sort of jovial Mentor, recounted in queer and graphic English his manifold experiences of courts, and camps, and cities. No stranger, with any reasonable claim upon Mrs. Washington's good-nature, was turned away unfed, and, (in cases of real distress,) uncheered and unassisted. A party of Tory Quakeresses from Philadelphia, on the way south to visit their banished husbands, received much attention from the Commander-in-Chief and his wife, whom they gratefully described as "a pretty, sociable kind of woman."<sup>1</sup> She certainly was pretty, and noticeably plump, which at her age were not incompatible. As spring advanced, the American matrons at Valley Forge formed a large and, in a quiet way, a distinguished company. Lady Stirling was there; and handsome, cheerful Mrs. Knox, of whom it has been said that she followed the army like the drum. The sight of them aroused sad and longing thoughts in the breast of Lafayette; although he carefully and loyally explained in his letters home that he did not envy his colleagues their wives, but the power of having their wives with them.

Mrs. Nathanael Greene, who had used her opportunities when a school-girl, talked the French of a Rhode Island academy so courageously that her general's narrow quarters were crowded of an evening with foreign officers. There was no space in the hut for dancing, and no card-table; since all games of chance were strictly prohibited by Washington's orders.<sup>2</sup> "But there was tea and coffee, and pleasant conversation

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Mrs. Henry Drinker*; April 6, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> "Gaming of every kind is expressly forbidden, as being the foundation of evil, and the cause of many a brave officer's ruin. Games of exercise for amusement may not only be permitted, but encouraged." *Circular from the Commander-in-Chief to the Brigadier Generals*; Morristown, May 26, 1777. Playing cards had been specifically mentioned in a previous General Order.

always, and music often, — no one who had a good voice being allowed to refuse a song.”<sup>1</sup> The hostess had still many years of life before her; but her brave husband was taken from her very shortly after the triumph of the cause for which he had so stoutly fought. His place in the estimation of the American people is indicated by the deference which everywhere attended his widow. Whenever she visited Mrs. Washington, the President, however deeply he was engaged, always made a point of handing her to her carriage himself; and her humbler countrymen paid her the same compliment that they paid to their President’s wife, and insisted upon calling her Lady Greene. American women have since then come into very much grander titles; but none of those titles are more honourable than hers, or will be longer and more respectfully remembered.

On May Day, 1778, it was known in camp that Treaties of Commerce and Alliance between the Crown of France, and the Government of the United States, had been signed in Paris. Most of the soldiers were politicians enough to appreciate the full significance of the tidings that their Republic had been recognised as one of the Family of Nations by the second naval and military power in the world. Washington, in a General Order, counselled his followers to direct their gratitude to the quarter where, in his own belief, gratitude was due. “It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe to defend the cause of the United American States, and finally to raise us up a powerful friend, among the princes of the earth, to establish our liberty and independence upon a lasting foundation, it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the Divine goodness, and celebrating the important event which we owe to his Divine interposition.” So the proclamation ran; and, on the following Thursday, the troops were under arms by dawn. Prayers

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Nathanael Greene*, by George Washington Greene; Book Second, Chapter 25.

were offered, and the customary Thanksgiving Sermon, which has been happily called the Te Deum of New England, was preached at the head of every brigade. Baron von Steuben, with his five assistants in his train, passed slowly through the regiments, inspecting weapons and accoutrements, and giving a finishing touch to the dressing of the ranks.<sup>1</sup> The whole army advanced, in review order, towards the high ground from which Washington, accompanied by Nathanael Greene in his unaccustomed character of a quasi-civilian, surveyed the imposing spectacle. The men were still poorly clothed;<sup>2</sup> but they stepped along with firelocks sloped and heads erect, looking, for the first time, like the soldiers that they were. Thirteen cannon-shots were discharged, slowly and successively; and a running fire passed up and down from right to left, and left to right, along a line of ten thousand muskets. There was huzzaing for the King of France, and for the Friendly European Powers, followed by a storm of cheers in honour of the American Nation. A banquet of fifteen hundred covers stood ready beneath an amphitheatre of tent-cloth, to which the officers marched in procession, thirteen abreast, with arms closely linked, as an emblem of the union of their thirteen States. It was a counter-pageant to the Meschianza, without the tissue and the spangles, but with more of meaning. The rank and file obtained their share of the good things which had been pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Nathanael Greene*; Book Third, Chapter 2. The account of Valley Forge, in Mr. George Washington Greene's volumes, is interesting from first to last.

<sup>2</sup> The Clothing Department continued to be administered by the Board of War. "An application for linen for thirteen thousand shirts, and fifteen thousand overalls, was answered by a promise of thirty thousand yards. Some three months afterwards, thirteen hundred yards arrived; but it proved so poor that it was all rejected." Three hundred hats were so small that they had to be re-sold, and blankets thought to be large enough for a pair of men were found too narrow for one. Not until November, 1778, was Washington able to inform the President of Congress that his soldiers had the clothes which they needed. *The Administration of the Revolutionary Army*; Chapter 6. *Washington Correspondence*.

vided. Continental soldiers, under arrest for a peccadillo, were set at liberty to enjoy the day; and a spy from the hostile lines, who had been detected and seized, was dismissed unharmed after giving a promise that he would faithfully recount to his employers everything which he had heard and witnessed. Mankind was welcome to learn that America was once again, and better than ever, armed at all points for the ordeal of battle.

The country felt an unwonted sense of strength, and an instinctive confidence that the worst was over. Everybody praised Washington; and Washington was careful to remind his fellow-citizens how very much of the credit should be allotted to others besides himself. A European admirer had sent him some epaulettes and sword-knots, for presentation to those generals whom he thought fit to honour; and he accordingly gave them to Arnold and Lincoln, as a mark of his regard for two brave men whose shining conduct, at the most critical of emergencies, had been rewarded by very severe wounds, and an almost total absence of official notice and commendation.<sup>1</sup> Still less did George Washington forget what he owed to the army which had gone through the season of affliction at Valley Forge. Taking an early opportunity for paying his tribute to that humble, but invaluable, military virtue which, in the judgment of foreign critics, was the peculiar characteristic of the American private, he thanked his troops for their "uncomplaining patience" during the recent scarcity of provisions in camp. Their conduct, (he said,) had shown that they possessed in an eminent degree the spirit of soldiers, and the magnanimity of patriots. His words went home to many hearts; for the dismal reports which arrived from the encampment on the Schuylkill

<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of December, 1778, a surgeon in the Continental army sent a report of their condition from the hospital at Albany. "General Lincoln," he said, "is in a fair way of recovery. He is the patient Christian. Not so the gallant Arnold; for his wound, though less dangerous in the beginning than Lincoln's, is not in so fair a way of healing. He abuses us as a set of ignorant pretenders."

River, during those black months, had brought alarm and anguish to countless families. Americans were pre-eminently a domestic people; and, in every age of the world, the favourite son of the household is the son who has gone to the war.<sup>1</sup> The proud and mournful traditions of that winter survived, for many a long year, in every township of every State, and have taken a firm hold on the imagination of posterity. Nations, like the readers of fiction, love a sad story which ends well; and the name of Valley Forge will never cease to be associated with the memory of sufferings quietly and steadfastly borne, but not endured in vain.

On the twenty-fourth of May Sir William Howe relinquished the command to Sir Henry Clinton, and embarked for England. "I am just returned," wrote Captain André, "from conducting our beloved General to the water-side, and have seen him receive a more flattering testimony of the love and attachment of his army than all the splendour and pomp of the Meschianza could convey to him. I have seen the most gallant of our officers, and those whom I least suspected of giving such instances of their affection, shed tears while they bade him farewell." Howe did not wear his heart on his sleeve; and he never, either by speech or letter, gave an indication of the feelings with which he took his final departure from that land of baffled hopes

<sup>1</sup> "Plus amat e natis mater plerumque duobus  
Pro cujus reditu, quod gerit arma, timet."

So, eighteen hundred years before, the Roman poet had written; and so American mothers felt, — all the more because they understood and loved the cause which their sons were defending. The sentiment was reflected in the popular art of the hour. One of the many pictures inspired by this motive is described in a sale-catalogue of the Revolutionary period. A young militiaman, just returned from his first campaign, was represented sitting in the kitchen of a log-house, "his clothes torn and ragged," while a meal was prepared for him by the negro servants. "Facing him sits his old mother, and behind his chair his sister leans. Next to her is another sister, with a sucking child at her breast, listening attentively; the passions that agitate their minds extremely well expressed in their countenances."



and lost opportunities.<sup>1</sup> His troops, who had never experienced defeat while fighting under his own eye, admired him as enthusiastically, and believed in him as implicitly as ever.

“Chained to our arms, while Howe the battle led,  
Still round these files her wings shall Conquest spread.  
Loved though he goes, the spirit still remains  
That with him bore us o’er these trembling plains.  
On Hudson’s banks<sup>1</sup> the sure presage we read  
Of other triumphs to our arms decreed;  
Nor fear but equal honours shall repay  
Each hardy deed where Clinton leads the way.”

These martial verses from a soldier’s pen, which at all events were as good as much that then passed for poetry among civilians in England, faithfully expressed the aspirations of a most valiant army. But the prophecy did not meet with fulfilment. The tide of British conquest had already attained its utmost limit, and even the retention of Philadelphia was to the last degree precarious. The foresight of Washington, and the supreme importance of the reasons which had led him to take an audacious resolution, and to persevere in it under appalling difficulties, were now patent to the world. People had wondered, in some cases mockingly and contemptuously, at his pertinacity in clinging to Valley Forge “as if he had bought the freehold of it;” but nobody wondered now. The motives of his strategy had been described to the British ministry by Joseph Galloway, as sagacious a Loyalist as any in America. General Washington, (this gentleman wrote,)

<sup>1</sup> A brief and telling account of the principal occasions upon which destruction must have overtaken the Americans, if Sir William Howe had been alive to his chances, is incidentally given in a letter from Washington to Governor Trumbull. The passage is quoted in the Second Appendix at the end of the volume.

<sup>2</sup> This was an allusion to the capture, by Sir Henry Clinton, of two strong forts overlooking the Hudson River. The affair took place on the sixth October, 1777.

The lines were written by Captain André as part of “an address intended to have been spoken at the Meschianza by a Herald, holding in his hand a Laurel-wreath.” *The Gentleman’s Magazine* for August 1778.

had fixed his winter-quarters only two-and-twenty miles from Philadelphia, with a design to command the rural districts of Pennsylvania; to have access to the Jerseys, and keep up his communication with the eastern provinces; to secure his retreat over the Susquehanna; and, until then, to cut off supplies from the English garrison in the city. Washington, as a matter of fact, had no more idea of retreating over the Susquehanna than over the Mississippi; but, in all other respects, Galloway accurately divined his intentions.

It was a bold and a sound plan which, before the end of May 1778, had developed itself into triumphant performance. Planted on the flank of his enemy, — just so far away as to be secure against surprise, but sufficiently near to profit by every opening for aggressive action, — Washington had, by this time, regiments enough to guard his own camp, and to dominate Pennsylvania. His flying columns swept the more remote townships clear of food and fodder, and left a bare larder for the British Commissariat. His light dragoons, few in number, but riding choice horses which were regularly and plentifully fed, suppressed the traffic between the suburban farmers, and their customers in the city, with complete immunity to themselves.<sup>1</sup> Henry

<sup>1</sup> It was not easy to force the Americans to battle against their will. They had always been able to take very good care of themselves as individuals, and they had now learned to manœuvre in masses. Towards the latter end of May two thousand infantry had been detached from their main army under the charge of Lafayette. They were surrounded by more than twice their own number of royal troops; and Sir William Howe made so sure of effecting their capture that, before leaving Philadelphia for the front, he invited a party of ladies to meet the French Marquis at supper. But the Continental officers took the alarm just in time, and extricated themselves, and their artillery, from an almost hopeless position with extraordinary coolness and agility.

Earlier in the year news came to Philadelphia that Harry Lee was lodged in a solitary dwelling, with a very slender escort. Emulous of Colonel Harcourt's celebrated exploit, nearly two hundred royal dragoons made a night-march of twenty miles, and beset the house in which the American cavalryman lay; but they found on this occasion that they had to do with the wrong sort of Lee for their purposes. Though he had not a soldier for each window, the young fellow made so stout a fight that he beat off his assailants in a style which delighted Washington.

Lee and his cavaliers very soon made the neighbourhood too hot for small parties of English and German foragers; and, when the Royal troops went forth to collect provisions, they seldom ventured to march in less strength than a full brigade. Their generals reluctantly acknowledged that Pennsylvania, to all intents and purposes, had become a hostile province; while New Jersey blazed like a fiery furnace of revolution on the eastern shore of the Delaware. The force commanded by Sir Henry Clinton was no longer a field-army with unfettered liberty of movement, subsisting on the resources, and protecting the loyalty, of the Central Colonies. It was the isolated, the beleaguered, and, (so far as access by dry land was in question,) the jealously and closely blockaded garrison of a single city; and a garrison, moreover, which would very soon be needed elsewhere. The Comte d'Estaing, accompanied by twelve French sail of the line, and a batch of frigates with four thousand good French infantry on board, might be expected off the American coast before the summer was much older. All through May and June he was making the best of his way, (though that best was very bad,) across the Atlantic Ocean; and the result might be extremely serious if he should arrive in New York Bay while the British army at Philadelphia was distant a hundred and twenty miles by road, and the British squadron in the Delaware three hundred miles by water.

Philadelphia was henceforward reduced to depend on the Delaware for the transport of food as exclusively as London depended on the Thames for coal. It was a difficult matter to protect the navigation of a river when both its shores were in the possession of a vigilant enemy. In the daytime, Washington's artillery officers brought down cannon to judiciously selected points along the course of the channel; and, when night fell, the Jerseymen put off in skiffs to the attack of any cattle-ship, or string of flour-barges, whose crew kept a bad watch. But the forty leagues of open sea, between the Capes of the Delaware and

Sandy Point, were the most hazardous stage of the voyage from New York to Philadelphia; for the American privateers were driving a roaring trade. To range the ocean under a letter of marque was an excitement, and almost a pastime, for those fishermen and shipmasters of the Eastern States whom, in an evil hour for British commerce, the British Parliament had banished from the exercise of their accustomed callings. Some among them, in the quietest of times, had never been averse to an occasional turn at smuggling; and they now fastened eagerly upon an occupation which had an appearance of reconciling the claims of patriotic duty with the attractions of an adventurous life, and the prospect of enormous gains. A very small company of ill-armed and half-manned American vessels captured, in one month, nine large merchantmen, with cargoes valued at a hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling. The zest of success was sharpened by the varied, and very uncertain, character of the spoil. Two lucky privateers,—for they usually cruised in couples,—brought into port three West Indiamen, carrying more than twenty thousand dollars in specie, and above a thousand hogsheads of sugar; fifty pipes of the best Madeira wine; and a very fine turtle destined for Lord North, “with his Lordship’s name nicely cut on the shell, which was yesterday presented by the captain to the worthy President of the American Congress.”<sup>1</sup> Everything on board the prizes was money, or money’s worth; and not a few of them were laden with warlike stores which were despatched straight from the quayside to Washington’s camp. The inventories of the booty included great quantities of arms and ammunition besides many hundred suits of military clothing. Seven ship-loads of provisions, sent from England and Ireland for the use of the royal troops, were taken off the coast of Rhode Island at a single haul. It was reckoned that the Americans, by the end of 1778, had captured nearly a thousand merchant-ships, valued at

<sup>1</sup> *American Archives.*

about two million pounds;<sup>1</sup> and the perils of the sea were enormously enhanced as soon as French frigates made their appearance in the Western waters.<sup>2</sup>

The military situation at Philadelphia had become very bad; and, to those who looked below the surface, the social and political conditions, which prevailed in the district occupied by the royal army, were of still more gloomy omen for the royal cause. Sir William Howe's campaign had been undertaken on the theory that a great majority of Pennsylvanians, and Marylanders, and New Jerseymen were sincere well-wishers to the English Crown, — ready and willing to declare themselves against the Revolution as soon as Washington was defeated, and driven outside their borders. From that moment forward the rich and populous Central Colonies, administered by a stable and vigorous government of prominent Loyalists, would be a citadel of royalism in the sense that New England was a citadel of rebellion. But these fair hopes were soon dispersed. The relations between the British generals, and the American Tories, were uncomfortable, and mutually unprofitable, from the very first; and both parties grew less and less satisfied with each other as the war went on.

Sir William Howe's cherished project for increasing, and perhaps even doubling, the strength of his army

<sup>1</sup> *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*; by Captain A. T. Mahan; Chapter 9.

<sup>2</sup> Those perils occupy much space in Lord Carlisle's New York journals and correspondence. The packet which was to bring him letters from his wife never reached its destination. "The transport," he wrote, "with all my things, I suppose is also taken; and Monsieur d'Estaing will go about in my carriage, and drink all my wine." When a colonel, who bored him, sailed for England, the fastidious young nobleman professed to regret that the obnoxious officer would fall into the hands of French or Americans, and not of Turks; since the vulgar notion was that the Turks cut out the tongue of those whom they made their prisoners. There was a period in the summer of 1778 during which naval opinion in New York estimated the chances against an unarmed ship reaching England at three to one. *The Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle, preserved at Castle Howard. Historical Manuscripts Commission; Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part VI.*



by the aid of local levies began, and ended, in flat disappointment. "In May 1778," (he wrote,) "when I left America, nine hundred and seventy-four men constituted all the force that could be collected in Pennsylvania, after the most indefatigable exertions, during eight months;" whereas more than ten times that number of New England farmers and frontiersmen, in half as many weeks, had shouldered their weapons and marched forth to oppose Burgoyne. The small people among the Pennsylvanian Loyalists had no mind for fighting; and their great men shrank from responsibility, and neither cared, nor dared, to govern. They had not a Franklin, or a John Adams, or a Robert Morris, or still less a Washington, among them; and such willingness as any of them displayed to serve the King, met with very scanty encouragement from the King's representatives. The military authorities showed themselves blind to the duty, and inferior to the task, of organising an efficient and self-respecting civil government in those portions of the Continent which had been conquered by the royal arms. One most fatal impediment to the recovery of America by the Crown was the startling contrast between the methods of administration within, and without, the British lines. On the one side of that boundary were to be seen rulers like Jonathan Trumbull, and William Livingston, and George Clinton, — chosen by the people; trusted and obeyed by the people; supported and advised by freely elected State Assemblies; husbanding and dispensing the finances of their respective provinces in the interest of the national defence; and acting in friendly concert, and on a footing of complete equality, with the generals of the national army. On the other side was military domination, untempered and unchecked, and too often insolent, ignorant, and lax even beyond the bounds of honesty; military police-courts substituted for the tribunals of the land; arbitrary and degrading punishments inflicted upon peaceable, well-affected, Tory citizens who had given some chance offence to this Town Major,

or that German colonel; forced requisitions in the place of voted taxes; commissaries and contractors subjected to no trained and intelligent official control, jobbing and stealing with assured impunity, and going home in rapid succession to set up as country gentlemen in England. The inevitable consequences of such a system were plainly set forth in a memorial addressed to Lord Carlisle by the Chief Justice of New York. "The Americans," (so the Judge wrote,) "whether Loyalists, or reduced and helpless Rebels, will naturally grow impatient if they find themselves under a government perfectly military, and will soon look out for that happiness which is only to be enjoyed under a complete establishment of Civil Police. . . . New York, my Lord, exhibits proof that the government of an army will please only in the tumultuous joy of the first moment of redemption."

Our acquaintance with these deplorable transactions is mainly, and indeed almost exclusively, derived from Tory sources. American Whigs took very little account of scandals and abuses known to them only by report; but the Loyalist pamphleteers and historians had been eyewitnesses and victims of that maladministration to which, more than to any other single circumstance, they attributed the ultimate ruin of their cause.<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia was a royal garrison-town only for as many months as the years during which New York suffered under the same dispensation; but in Philadelphia, no less than in New York, the blight of military occupation was destructive to the vitality, the independence, and the energy of the city. Municipal self-government was at once extinguished, and the resident citizens were excluded from public employment unless they were willing to accept the rank of underlings and

<sup>1</sup> The internal history of New York City during the Revolutionary War is narrated in minute, but not superfluous or uninteresting, detail by Judge Jones in the eight chapters at the commencement of his second volume; and in his first volume, in a chapter entitled "The Base Transactions of Commissaries, Quartermasters, and Barrackmasters, and Engineers in America."

instruments. Among those citizens Joseph Galloway stood first in the general estimation. He was a learned lawyer, and an advocate in very large practice, who had been sent by his fellow-townsmen as a delegate to the first Continental Congress. As a member of the old Pennsylvanian Assembly he had held his own with, and afterwards against, Benjamin Franklin; and he had presided over its deliberations, with rare distinction, in the character of Speaker. His loyalty to the throne was beyond dispute. The turbulence and disorder which were engendered by the opposition to the Stamp Act had alienated his sympathies from the popular party; and his dislike of the Revolution was intensified by an aversion to Presbyterians, whom in his own mind he associated "with rioters, and the baser elements of society."<sup>1</sup> He was the man, of all others, who could have filled in Pennsylvania a commanding position, analogous to that which Governor Trumbull occupied in Connecticut; but there was no such place for Joseph Galloway in his own colony, or even in his own city. Sir William Howe, as a recognition of his merits, appointed him to be a sort of superior police officer, charged with the issue of regulations governing trade and markets, the entrance of boats and vessels, and the care of streets and lamps. He was expected, moreover, to compile a political census of the inhabitants, marking out the disaffected, from the loyal, for the guidance and information of the Provost Marshal. Those were the most exalted functions which, under military rule, were allotted to the most eminent civilian who was then domiciled in the capital of Pennsylvania.

Many Loyalist householders of Philadelphia had hailed the rehabilitation of the King's authority with a pleasant sense of approaching peace and comfort, and of departed danger. They believed themselves to have seen the last of revolutionary tyranny, and of paper dollars; and they fondly imagined that commercial

<sup>1</sup> *Joseph Galloway, the Loyalist Politician*; by Ernest H. Baldwin, Ph.D.

prosperity would forthwith revive, and that every honest man would thenceforward live in undisturbed enjoyment of his property, and secure possession of his home. On the twenty-sixth September, 1778, Robert Morton, an ardent partisan of the English connection, made the following entry in his private diary. "About eleven o'clock Lord Cornwallis marched into this city with his division of the British and auxiliary troops, to the great relief of the inhabitants who have too long suffered the yoke of arbitrary power. . . . This day has put a period to the existence of Continental money in this city. *Esto perpetua!*"

The Pennsylvanian Tories were faithful subjects of King George; but they had American hearts, and they felt a qualm of humiliation and disquietude when the long column of Hessians poured down their street, with the swing and swagger of an invading army. The forebodings of the most timid among the spectators were abundantly and promptly justified; for the German colonels made it very apparent that they viewed Philadelphia as a conquered city. Bred in an atmosphere of privilege and despotism, they were not at the trouble, when dealing with Americans, to distinguish between one social class, or political party, and another. In their eyes the whole population was a homogeneous mass of low-born, ill-conditioned, and exceedingly impertinent, plebeians. They were all rebels together, in act or inclination; and the least admirable among them were those hypocrites and time-servers who, — after bombarding their Sovereign Liege with petitions, and remonstrances, and votes of censure upon the ministers of his choice, — now plumed themselves on their so-called "loyalty" because they had not risen against him in arms when he declined to alter his policy at their dictation. One Hessian officer wrote home to a State Councillor at Cassel that the American Revolution was a Scotch, Irish, Presbyterian rebellion, the authors and instigators of which were the famous Quakers. Another described Philadelphia as a common

sink of religions and nations, a mess and jumble of every sect and belief, which did not yield to Sodom and Gomorrah in respect of all the vices. Tories and Whigs, — Methodists, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians, — the King of England owed them nothing; and the King's gallant allies could not be better employed than in despoiling them of everything that they called their own.

That was the creed of the foreign auxiliaries, and they were not slow to convert theory into practice. Robert Morton soon had to tell how he met a large gang of Germans on their way to empty his barn, and strip his garden. He applied for a guard to protect him, and on that occasion he saved his property; but next day another party arrived with horses, carts, and sacks, and carried away his hay, his cabbages, and his potatoes. He was no worse off than his neighbours, every one of whom was robbed of the vegetables and the fruit on which he depended for maintaining his family through the winter. It was a catching example; and many British privates vied with the Hessians in the pursuit of plunder and mischief. When the cold weather set in, the soldiers, sometimes without orders, and seldom under very strict supervision, began to pull down wooden houses for fuel. A poor clergyman, himself a German, complained that the fence of a new graveyard, which had cost his congregation nearly eighty pounds, had been taken down and burned.<sup>1</sup> Then ensued the rifling of larders and cellars, the ransacking of wardrobes, and the demolition of libraries and furniture, the choicest in all America, which had been the pride and delight of wealthy and cultured Loyalist gentlemen. That was something, (so Mr. Morton declared,) which General Washington's army could not be accused of. There is not, (he wrote,) one instance to be produced where the rebels had wantonly

<sup>1</sup> *Extracts from the Journals of the Reverend Doctor Henry Muhlenberg, Minister and Praeses of the German Lutheran Ministry in the State of Pennsylvania.*



destroyed or burned their friends' property. The state to which a large number of neat, and even elegant, houses were reduced by their military inmates, and especially by the cavalry, was shocking to a cleanly, precise, and home-loving people.<sup>1</sup> After the evacuation of Philadelphia County by the royal army, an assessment of the damage sustained by the inhabitants was made in all the wards and townships. The Loyalists, who had been the wealthiest, and who therefore suffered the most, were no longer present to put in their claims; but, even so, the amount of loss inflicted upon private individuals was estimated at a hundred and eighty thousand pounds of English money.

The Philadelphians, among their other troubles, had no means of escape from that compulsory inactivity which is the purgatory of an energetic race. Foreign commerce, their main source of livelihood, was dead. The influx of sutlers, who had come up the river with the fleet, had ruined the shops. Professional avocations were at a stand-still; and the services of townsmen were not asked, or accepted, for the government and administration of their own municipality. Two or three of the less reputable Tories, in an evil hour for themselves, consented to act as informers against their Whig neighbours, or as guides to parties of marauders in their excursions round the farms and villages outside the city. An Episcopal clergyman, — who had a flowing pen, and defective insight into character, — occupied himself over the composition of a long-winded epistle in which he exhorted Washington to get the Declaration of Independence rescinded by Congress, and after-

<sup>1</sup> "The Congress meets in the College Hall, as the State House was left by the enemy in a most filthy and sordid situation, as were many of the public and private buildings in the City. Some of the genteel houses were used for stables, and holes cut in the parlour-floors," for the purpose of shovelling the dirt into the cellars. "The country northward for several miles is one common waste, — the houses burned; the fruit-trees cut down; fences carried away; gardens and orchards destroyed; Mr. Dickinson's and Morris's fine seats all demolished." Letter from Josiah Bartlett, delegate to Congress from New Hampshire: Philadelphia, July 13, 1778.

wards to negotiate with the Crown at the head of his army.<sup>1</sup> But the Loyalists, for the most part, left politics alone, and endured their dreary and aimless existence in a spirit of dignified resignation.

There was no satisfaction to be drawn from the scenes around them. The Quakers, and not the Quakers only, were saddened and shocked by all those unhappy consequences which are inseparable from the presence among a civil community of a numerous and idle army. Regular employment grew slack. There was much gambling and drunkenness, and the streets were filled with loungers. "Sober thrift and quiet rectitude" had ceased to be the special qualities of a Pennsylvanian artisan; and young people of both sexes, and all ranks, had bitter, and sometimes lifelong, cause to regret that long carnival of frivolity and temptation.<sup>2</sup> The officers and soldiers, as was only too natural, did not make it their business to inquire whether their mode of life in Philadelphia conduced to the morality of the town. "We are well supplied," (so a Hessian captain wrote,) "with all that is necessary and superfluous. Assemblies, Concerts, Comedies, Clubs, and the like, make us forget that there is any war, save that it is a capital joke." But the war was no laughing matter for the helpless Loyalists. One of them, who had been rich when hostilities commenced, was so impoverished, that in July 1778, his whole income did not suffice to pay his taxes. Others, whose dwellings had been wrecked and pillaged, complained that, when the royal authorities took measures to check plunder

<sup>1</sup> Washington had no feeling hotter than contempt for the suggestion that he should play the part of General Monk; but Washington's countrymen did not so easily forgive the insult. The writer of the letter, after a protracted exile in England, returned to spend his last months in Philadelphia, where he now rests in peace beneath a laudatory epitaph:

"On January the Third, 1798, the Reverend Jacob Duché passed from his temporal to his angelic life."

<sup>2</sup> The Meeting for Sufferings of First Month, Eighth, 1778, issued an impressive warning against "the spirit of dissipation, levity, and profaneness which sorrowfully has spread, and is spreading, principally promoted by the military among us in and near the City."

and outrage, "it was in favour of their open, professed, and determined enemies." The strength of their political faith was not proof against their sense of private wrong, and they began to wonder how they could ever have been so simple and unsuspicious as to welcome the advent of King George's soldiers. Their partisanship was abated, and even in some cases extinct; but none the less they were all marked men, — scouted and execrated by the mass of their compatriots as having fraternised with the invader, and been recreant to the American cause. Seldom, in all the tragic history of revolutions, did a company of worthier and more blameless people find themselves in a more pitiable and hopeless strait.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Diary of Robert Morton. Diary of James Allen. The Journal of Captain Montrésor. Extracts from the Letter-Book of Captain Johann Heinrichs, of the Hessian Jäger Corps. Philadelphia, the Place and the People: Chapters 13 and 14. A History of Quaker Government in Pennsylvania, by Isaac Sharpless, President of Haverford College: Volume II.*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CARLISLE COMMISSION. MONMOUTH COURT HOUSE

ON the second of December, 1777, the fateful tidings from Saratoga arrived in London; and, very soon after the commencement of the new year, Cabinet Ministers were driven to acknowledge that an open breach with France was a matter of a few weeks, and possibly of a few hours. It was the season for strong measures, and strange proposals. Lord Barrington, on his responsibility as Secretary of War, informed George the Third that he had not a single general in whom the nation placed any confidence, and urged that a command should be offered to Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. It was extremely unlikely that the victor of Minden would consent to take orders from a certain Secretary of State whom he had formerly known in Germany as Lord George Sackville; and His Majesty, who had a healthy sense of humour, made sport of the artless suggestion. He turned again in his need to Lord Amherst, who a second time declined to draw his sword against the revolted colonists; but the old warrior gave his Sovereign the benefit of his advice, and warned him that it would be impossible to "carry on with any effect an offensive land war" across the Atlantic, unless Sir William Howe, or the general who succeeded him, was reinforced by forty thousand men. Ten thousand regular infantry, as the King well knew, were the very utmost that could be placed in line on English soil to repel a French invasion. All hope of subduing the rebellion by force was for the time abandoned; and Lord North was empowered to try his hand at recovering America by political and diplomatic measures.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Political Life of William Wildman, Viscount Barrington, compiled from Original Papers by his brother, Shute, Bishop of Durham*; London, 1814. George the Third to Lord North; January 9 and 13, and February 5, 1778.

On the seventeenth of February, 1778, the Prime Minister imparted to a bewildered and dejected House of Commons his scheme for the reconciliation of the alienated colonies. He proposed to repeal the tea duty, and to pass an Act removing all doubts and apprehensions concerning taxation, by the parliament of Great Britain, in any of the provinces or plantations of North America. He announced himself as prepared to expunge from the statute-book the law which closed the port of Boston; the law which destroyed the charter of Massachusetts; and the laws which excluded New England mariners from the Newfoundland fisheries, and which prohibited trade and intercourse between Great Britain and America. A full pardon was offered to all who had been engaged in rebellion; and the Home Government definitely, and finally, renounced the power of bringing political prisoners across the sea to be tried for treason in England. No bill, enacting an alteration in the Constitution of any colony, was henceforward to be laid before Parliament, save and except at the request of the colony itself. The practice in American Courts of Justice, and the tenure of office by the Judges, were to be regulated in accordance with colonial opinion; and the royal Governors, and civil and judicial magistrates, were to be elected by the local population, upon an understanding that all such appointments were subject to the approval of the King. The credit of the British Treasury might be employed to facilitate the withdrawal of the large quantity of paper currency issued by Congress for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the war against the British Crown. Any expression of a desire, on the part of the colonists, to have a reasonable number of representatives in the parliament at Westminster would be deliberately, and very amicably, considered. A Royal Commission was to visit America in order to arrange the details of pacification on the spot; and those Commissioners would be specifically charged to address the Commander-in-Chief of the American forces, and all other members of



the American Government, "by any style or title" which the personages in question thought fit to assume. Small or great, ceremonial or essential, every point in dispute between the British Cabinet, and the Continental Congress, was surrendered without ambiguity and without reserve.

"A dull and melancholy silence for some time succeeded to this speech. It had been heard with profound attention, but without a single mark of approbation to any part, from any description of men, or any particular man, in the House."<sup>1</sup> The blow was crushing to the self-respect of those very numerous gentlemen who had been returned for ministerial boroughs under a pledge that they agreed, in every detail, with the American policy of the Government.<sup>2</sup> Honourable members sat wondering what had become of the vital British interests, and the immutable constitutional principles, for which the nation had so long been fighting. Almost without drawing breath, the Prime Minister had abandoned the whole of a policy the obstinate pursuit of which had involved the Empire in six years of riot and civil strife, three sanguinary and ruinous campaigns, a duel to the death against France, and the near prospect of a succession of wars with an unknown number of other European States. It is a marvellous thought that the authors of that policy should have continued to pose as statesmen. But it is more remarkable still that there are writers in our own generation who exalt George the Third, and Lord North,

<sup>1</sup> "History of Europe" in the *Annual Register* for 1778; Chapter 7. Lord North's speech, as given in an abbreviated and confused parliamentary report, indicates the general character of his proposals. The complete plan is expounded, with minute and curious precision, in *The Instructions by George the Third to his Commissioners to treat with the American Colonies*.

<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Sandwich set down, in black and white, the terms which he demanded for one of the seats at Huntingdon. "I must have 2000*l.* to be lent me for five years on my bond; and to pay the expenses of the election, which in all probability would not amount to 300*l.* The conditions offered to Captain Phipps are the thinking, and acting, as I do on all American points." *The Manuscripts of the Marquess of Abergavenny*.

as wise and patriotic rulers; and who condemn Fox, and Burke, and Lord Chatham, and all the other opponents of an insane and fatal course of public action, as poor-spirited and disloyal citizens, the friends of every country except their own.

The principal Commissioner was Frederick, Earl of Carlisle, a contemporary and schoolfellow of Charles Fox, and the sworn companion of his early scrapes and follies. Lord Carlisle had already begun to mend his ways; and he continued on the path of improvement until, before the close of a long life, he was respectability, — and, in the eyes of his youthful kinsman Lord Byron, even pomposity, — personified. In one important regard he was well qualified for the high function with which he had now been intrusted; inasmuch as he was a man of lofty and unblemished honour.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless London society, which had so recently been discussing the amount of his losses at cards, and the number and splendour of his dress-suits, was not as yet prepared to take him for a serious statesman. It is true that he had of late become a place-holder and a Privy Councillor; but the lives led by much older, and more exalted, members of Lord North's government were not such as to impress the world with a belief that accession to ministerial office must necessarily be accounted a sign of reformation, and a mark of grace. Carlisle seemed too slight and juvenile for a plenipotentiary; and the general opinion concerning him was summed up in the verdict that he was a very fit Commissioner for making a treaty which would never be made.<sup>2</sup> Our own generation, however, has no reason to regret that he was sent to America. Lord Carlisle was the frequent and intimate correspondent of George Selwyn, and much the better worth reading of the two. He strained

<sup>1</sup> "Lord Northington brought me home two nights in his coach, and in one of them the conversation turned upon you. He said there was nobody had a better idea of what a gentleman should be than Carlisle; that you was so throughout." George Selwyn to Lord Carlisle; Dec. 9, 1775.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole to Mason; March 4, 1778.

at wit less visibly than his older friend ; he wrote a clear downright style, free from the mixed jargon of French, Italian, Mayfair English, and hackneyed Latin phrases, which ordinarily disfigured Selwyn's letters ; and he had a far more observant and kindly interest in the large class of human beings who did not belong to White's or Brooks's. The private papers of Lord Carlisle, preserved among the archives at Castle Howard, afford a life-like and very amusing picture of Transatlantic scenes and manners from the point of view of a travelled and well-educated Englishman. So much, at any rate, the young nobleman did for the advantage of posterity ; while it is absolutely certain that, as far as the public object of his mission to America was concerned, the most experienced diplomatist in Christendom could have achieved nothing but failure.

All hope of a successful issue had vanished before ever Lord Carlisle, and his brother Commissioners, set foot upon Pennsylvanian soil. Acts of Parliament, (said Horace Walpole,) had made a rebellion ; but Acts of Parliament could not repeal one. The concessions offered by the mother-country had one fatal defect, that they came too late. The Treaty between the United States, and France, had now been signed ; and, instead of a peace with her own colonies, England henceforward "must expect war with the High Allies."<sup>1</sup> That was how Walpole put the case ; and the cleverest of all Lord North's parliamentary supporters, Edward Gibbon, was forced to admit that "the two great countries in Europe were fairly running a race for the favour of America ;" and that England was not the winner.<sup>2</sup>

When the news of the Paris Treaty arrived in Pennsylvania, the leaders of Congress thought it right to give Louis the Sixteenth an emphatic and public assurance that they would see him through the quarrel on which, for their sake, he had now embarked. They

<sup>1</sup> Walpole to Sir Horace Mann ; Feb. 18, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon to Holroyd ; Feb. 23, 1778.

called upon all officers in their employment to subscribe a form of oath by which they abjured allegiance to the King of Great Britain, and promised to maintain and defend the United States against George the Third, and his heirs and successors, according to the best of their skill and understanding, in the offices which they respectively held at the time of swearing. That last phrase was awkwardly constructed; and the officers of one Virginian brigade, though they were Whigs and rebels to a man, hesitated to sign because the words might be taken as implying an obligation not to retire from the army until the war was ended. When the generals at Valley Forge came together for the purpose of affixing their names to the paper, Charles Lee excited the boisterous hilarity of his comrades by explaining that, while he was prepared to refuse obedience to George the Third, he entertained a conscientious objection against renouncing the Prince of Wales. But these, and all other, scruples were speedily laid at rest; and every civil and military servant of the United States was henceforward bound by a solemn pledge of loyalty to the Republic, and hostility to the Crown.

It was an unhappy circumstance that the brothers Howe, who themselves were members of the Royal Commission for treating with the colonies,—and who were respected, and not disliked, by the great majority of Americans,—should be absent from New York when intelligence of what had taken place in the British parliament reached that city. The duty of opening communications with the Revolutionary authorities devolved upon Governor Tryon, who was bitterly hated, and universally distrusted and disbelieved. Tryon hastened to print off a large edition of Lord North's conciliatory bills, and took measures for having them read throughout the Confederacy. He enclosed copies to General Washington, with a polite request that he would aid in the work of distribution, "so that the people at large might be acquainted with the favourable disposition of Great Britain towards the American colo-

nies." Washington, after convincing himself, with some difficulty, that the Bills were genuine,<sup>1</sup> sent them to the President of Congress; and Congress unanimously resolved not to confer or treat with any Commissioners from Great Britain until the British fleet and army were withdrawn from the United States, and their independence recognised in positive and express terms by the British Ministers. Tryon received many replies to his circular, the most noteworthy of which came from Governor Trumbull. "If peace," the old man said, "be really the object, let your proposals be addressed properly to the proper power, and your negotiations honorably conducted. We shall then have some prospect of, (what is the most ardent wish of every honest American,) a lasting and honorable peace. The British nation may then, perhaps, find us as affectionate and valuable friends as we now are determined and fatal enemies, and derive from that friendship more solid and real advantage than the most sanguine can expect from conquest."<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Trumbull, when he wrote that sentence, had a true and prophetic glimpse into an exceedingly distant future.

Lord Carlisle and his colleagues had looked forward

<sup>1</sup> Washington had ground for suspicion, because the semi-official Tory press of New York made a practice of foisting upon its readers a large quantity of fictitious political literature. In February, 1778, Rivington's *Royal Gazette* printed, as a valuable discovery, some letters from the Commander-in-Chief of the American army to his wife and kinsfolk, which were stated to have been found in the possession of a mulatto servant who had been captured at Fort Lee. The letters were manufactured with a certain infernal skill, and contained passages artfully designed to show that Washington's public conduct was dictated solely by personal ambition, while at heart he disliked the Revolution and disapproved of the war.

In the following March two sham Resolutions of Congress were published in the *New York Gazette*, "with all the formalities of place and date, and the signatures of the President and Secretary, the object of which was to foment discontent in the American army, and prevent enlistments." Washington, more incensed than when his own reputation had been the subject of calumnious attack, denounced this proceeding as a forgery infamous to the last degree.

<sup>2</sup> *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*; Seventh Series, Vol. II.



to opening negotiations with Congress under very different circumstances from those which actually awaited them in Philadelphia. They had pictured themselves as offering terms of peace to a defeated adversary from the walls of his conquered capital. They had felt confident that Sir William Howe, and his victorious army, would keep General Washington at a very respectful distance from the royal outposts by the mere terror of their name; and they expected, with good reason, to find the Delaware as much an English water as the Humber or the Mersey. Even that hope was sadly disappointed. Lord Carlisle told his wife that he had enjoyed his voyage on the magnificent river; admiring "a beautiful country, covered with wood, and to all appearance extremely rich;" and passing in review, with close attention and constant amusement, more than three hundred sail of different shipping which he encountered on his journey upstream. But none the less he could not avoid noticing the chain of royal war vessels stationed a few miles from each other, all along the channel, in order to protect the navigation from hostile raiders; "for I am grieved," he said, "to tell you that both sides of the river are in possession of the enemy, who are well armed, and absolutely prevent any intercourse whatever with the land."<sup>1</sup> The British Commissioners arrived at Philadelphia on Saturday the sixth of June; and on the following Tuesday Lord Carlisle learned something about the state of affairs on shore. "I have this morning," he wrote, "been taking a ride into the country about ten miles;—grieved I am to say, eight miles beyond our possessions. Our lines extend only two; and the Provincial army is posted very strongly about six-and-twenty miles distant. This is market-day; and to protect the people bringing in provisions, which otherwise they would not dare to do, large detachments, to the amount of above two

<sup>1</sup> Lord Carlisle to Lady Carlisle: April 24 to June 17;—"a long letter in the form of a diary." *Castle Howard Manuscripts*.

thousand men, are sent forward into the country. We profited by this safe-guard ; and I attended the general, Sir Henry Clinton, as far as German Town, — a place as remarkable, and as much an object of curiosity for those who have any respect for the present times, as Edge Hill or Naseby Field is to those whose veneration is excited only by their great-grandfathers.”<sup>1</sup> The historical parallel was in one respect incomplete ; for Fairfax or Cromwell, six months after the battle, would most certainly have been free to revisit Naseby without an escort of two thousand pikemen and musketeers.

There was a keen sense of dissatisfaction and humiliation among the officers of Clinton’s army. They had been watching eagerly for the advent of summer, and for the arrival from England of a very strong reinforcement, on the exact figure of which they were all of them agreed. But the month of May, instead of bringing with it twenty thousand more British and German infantry, with the thrice welcome signal for an advance in force against Washington’s intrenchments, brought nothing more inspiriting than the report of Lord North’s very doleful oration in the House of Commons, and some odd copies of his conciliation bills. Lord Carlisle, however, who had never before in his life seen so many good soldiers together, was firmly persuaded that the troops already concentrated in Philadelphia, without the addition of another bayonet, were numerous enough, and brave enough, to bring America to reason. According to his own statement he had looked forward to the satisfaction of warning Congress that, if they trifled with the British proposals for an accommodation, “so fine an army, so disciplined, so healthy, so everything, might possibly be of some inconvenience to them ;” but he now learned that for some wise purposes, with which he was not acquainted, “this fine army was to be of no inconvenience to them whatever.”<sup>2</sup> Sir Henry Clinton,

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Carlisle to George Selwyn ; Philadelphia, Wednesday, June 10, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Carlisle to Lady Carlisle ; June 14, Philadelphia.

to his surprise and stupefaction, informed him that the Government at home had given positive orders to abandon Philadelphia, and retreat upon New York;—orders which the Secretary of State had industriously and designedly kept secret from Lord Carlisle, although they had been issued many weeks before his departure from England.<sup>1</sup> That was in Lord George Germaine's habitual manner; and the Prime Minister himself was greatly to blame for having sanctioned so wide a deviation from the rules of fair play, and honourable conduct, between man and man.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Carlisle's pride was cruelly wounded. He saw himself in the character of an envoy who had been befooled by his employers; and the military superiority, which is the vantage-ground of the diplomatist, had been deliberately, and in his view quite unnecessarily, thrown away at the precise moment when negotiations were about to commence.<sup>3</sup> He assured his wife, in language becoming a great English nobleman who likewise was a public servant, that he should keep his temper to the last, and exert himself to restrain the violence of some with whom he was obliged to act.<sup>4</sup> For the Commissioners were very angry; and Governor Johnstone, in particular, who had always been a fighting man,—and who, some years previously, did his utmost to shoot Lord George Germaine in a duel in

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Carlisle to the Reverend Mr. Ekins: Private.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Carlisle, when attending in Downing Street to receive his instructions, had an opportunity of informing himself how public business was done by the leading members of that very remarkable Cabinet. "Little passed," he wrote, "of any real importance; and I confess I came away by no means edified by the conversation, and not a little shocked at the slovenly manner with which an affair, so serious in its nature, had been dismissed."

<sup>3</sup> "That which we have always looked upon as the great instrument which was to secure us success, *the active and offensive course of Military operations*, was no longer there to support our proceedings. A defensive war carries with it neither threats nor terrors. . . . You will agree with me that our offers of peace wore too much the appearance of supplications for mercy from a vanquished, and exhausted, State." Lord Carlisle to the Reverend Mr. Elkins: Private.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Carlisle to Lady Carlisle; June 21, 1778.

Hyde Park, — was exceedingly outspoken when remarking on the treatment to which he and his brethren had been subjected. He agreed, (so he declared,) with an observation of the Marquis of Montrose that "there is nothing more contemptible than a retreating army, or a supplicating Prince."<sup>1</sup> King George's Commissioners soon tasted the full bitterness of the great Cavalier's maxim. They requested General Washington to grant them a passport for their Secretary, who was no less a personage than Doctor Adam Ferguson, Professor of Pneumatics and Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University. Washington's reply was a rather frigid sample of that courtesy which Americans never entirely withhold from an eminent man of letters.<sup>2</sup> While expressing his recognition of Doctor Ferguson's talents and popularity, he declined to admit him through the lines without a special order from the President of Congress; and the Commissioners, accordingly, had no choice but to send in their packet of papers under an ordinary flag of truce. The proposals made by the British Government met with an unfavourable reception, and a tardy response; for the answer of Congress, which in its effect was tantamount to a refusal, did not reach Lord Carlisle's hands until he had placed many leagues of river, and open sea, between himself and the city of Philadelphia.

For three years to come, until hostilities had died out, and the peace was fast approaching, Sir Henry Clinton was left in command of the royal forces in America. During the whole of that period the King insisted that some kind of war should be kept going; but he and his Ministers did not encourage, or even permit, any

<sup>1</sup> Governor George Johnstone to Lord Carlisle.

<sup>2</sup> "If an occasion shall present itself of an interview with Doctor Ferguson, you may rely, Sir, I shall esteem myself happy in showing him the civilities due to his literary and social character." George Washington to William Eden, Commissioner from the Court of Great Britain to America; Headquarters, 12 June, 1778. Washington, on the same day, wrote in much the same terms to Governor Johnstone.

serious attempt to recover by arms either New England, the birthplace and focus of the rebellion, or those rich and populous Central provinces where Congress was domiciled, and where Washington's army lay. Clinton was never in sufficient strength, and never his own master. He was supplied at uncertain intervals with scanty numbers of half-trained recruits, and distracted by Lord George Germaine's foolish and contradictory orders. He laboured under a still more embarrassing disadvantage, which at last resulted in a fatal catastrophe to the British arms; for he found himself unable to depend with any confidence, — in that region of islands, and estuaries, and navigable rivers, — upon the assistance of a navy mismanaged and misdirected by the Earl of Sandwich. A commander hampered by such difficulties was foredoomed to contemporary unpopularity, and to historical insignificance. Sir Henry Clinton's name is not now remembered by the great body of his fellow-countrymen; and in his own lifetime he was accounted the most notorious of those

“Generals who will not conquer when they may,  
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay.”<sup>1</sup>

Clinton was never the man to attempt impossibilities, or to accomplish miracles; but several times in the course of his career he was charged with the conduct of a specific military operation, and proved himself an unusually capable officer. His qualifications as a leader were seldom more severely tested than when the Cabinet in London imposed upon him the tough, and

<sup>1</sup> *Cowper's Table Talk*; London, 1782. A letter preserved among the manuscripts of the Earl of Verulam at Gorhambury gives a notion of the talk which went on in army circles, almost within Sir Henry Clinton's hearing. “Since our arrival nothing has happened sufficiently important to deserve your attention; and, (*entre nous*,) we expect nothing under our present commander. Nothing, surely, can be more shameful than our perfect inactivity during the whole summer and autumn. . . . For God's sake let us have a man of resolution or abilities!” J. Mervin Nooth to Viscountess Grimston; New York, November 23, 1779.



ungrateful, task of extricating King George's troops from Philadelphia, and replacing them on Manhattan Island.

It would have seemed an easy and simple matter to put them all on ship-board, with their stores and cannon, and carry them back to New York by water. But, in Sir Henry Clinton's judgment, the idea of committing the only English army in America to the hazards, and the possible delays, of an ocean voyage was forbidden by strategical considerations of the utmost gravity. If the winds were unfavourable, the great convoy of British transports might very well spend a month on their way between port and port, and would then arrive by driblets; while Washington, with sixteen or eighteen thousand men, could reach New York in a fortnight; and the Comte d'Estaing and his battle-ships, if he had used reasonable expedition, might be there already. The only method by which Clinton could make sure of averting that crushing disaster, which the loss of New York would inflict upon the royal cause, was to keep his own army constantly interposed between General Washington and the threatened city; and he accordingly determined to effect his retreat by land. Moreover, the accommodation on the fleet was not unlimited; and there was a great deal to be taken home which had never been brought out. The army now possessed five thousand horses, almost all of which had been collected, by requisition or purchase, during Sir William Howe's occupation of Pennsylvania. Something had been said about killing the greater part of them, as the French long afterwards killed their beasts of burden when Masséna retired from Portugal in the spring of 1811; but that was not an English expedient. There was another claim, which could not be ignored, upon the humanity of our countrymen. Room had to be found in the transports for a whole population of Loyalists; "unfortunate beings," (said Lord Carlisle,) "who at least deserved from us this mark of our attention and

compassion in preventing them from falling into the hands of a relentless enemy."

As early as the middle of May, orders had been issued that the heavy baggage of the army should be in readiness for embarkation at the shortest notice; and the large guns and mortars had been withdrawn from the redoubts, and carefully packed on board the Ordnance transports.<sup>1</sup> These necessary precautions could not be kept secret; and Philadelphia was soon in a ferment of emotion. It had become known that, after the departure of the British army, an Oath of Allegiance to the United States would be exacted from all private citizens under pains and penalties of extreme rigour. Sir William Howe had somewhat lightly advised a deputation of Loyalists to make their peace with the adversary, and throw themselves on the tender mercies of Congress; but these poor people only too well knew what that resource was worth. They were in an agony of distress and alarm; and Sir Henry Clinton, as the person responsible for the honour of England, assured them that no one who desired to sail should be left behind. The Quakers alone gave no sign of perturbation, and calmly pursued their ordinary avocations amidst the general panic and flurry. It seemed, (said an American writer,) as if, in their aversion to all military operations, they regarded even running away, that very material part of battle, as opposed to the principles of their Society.<sup>2</sup> It was not that they contemplated submission to Congress; for, — even if, under any circumstances whatever, they had been free to swear, — a pledge of subordination to a Revolutionary authority was the very last oath which they would think it right to take. They remained in Philadelphia, silent and passive under sharp persecution, and steadfastly refusing, by any word or action of their own, to abet war, or to countenance rebellion. Their courage and consistency vanquished the intoler-

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Captain Montrésor; May 14, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> *Philadelphia, the Place and the People*; Chapter 12.

ance of their political opponents; and, when hostilities at length ceased, and the Independence of America was acknowledged by the Court of Great Britain, they settled themselves down in willing obedience to the Government of the United States, which from that time forward they regarded as a lawful and existent power, ordained of God.

That was the course taken by the Quakers; but all other Pennsylvanian Tories who were too honest to belie their convictions, or who had committed themselves against the Revolution too deeply to be forgiven, directed their energies to the dreary work of preparing for exile. Over the space of a fortnight, from the twenty-eighth of May onwards, they were dismantling their beautiful houses, and carting their goods to the water-side, and installing their families between decks to the number of three thousand souls. As fast as the transports were loaded, they dropped down stream to their appointed anchorage, until the river was alive with vessels of every size and description, from the wharves along the city-front, to the mouth of the Brandywine. "You have the best heart in the world," (so Lord Carlisle wrote to a lady of rank in England;) "and it would tear it to pieces to be witness to what I now see from my cabin window, — all our ships, to the amount of about three hundred, transporting the miserable inhabitants of Philadelphia to some place of temporary protection from those they have offended by favouring our cause in this dispute." Such was indeed the case. The friends of the Crown were harshly, and often very cruelly, treated by the partisans of the Revolution. And yet it is impossible to deny that, if they had not been forced to take sides in a quarrel spontaneously and gratuitously sprung upon the colonies by the British ministry, the Philadelphian Tories, and their Whig neighbours, would at that very moment have all been living peaceably, and comfortably, as Loyalists together.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Carlisle to the Dutchess of —, June 18, 1778; on board the Trident. *Philadelphia; the Place and the People*; Chapters 13 and 14. President Sharpless's *History*; Chapter 8, on "Quaker Suffering."

The time was short; the demand for labour urgent and universal; and the means of carriage, both by road and sea, inadequate to so exceptional an emergency. Vast quantities of stores, which were exactly adapted to satisfy the most crying needs of the American troops and the American people, still remained undestroyed. "For salt," (wrote one of Lord Dartmouth's informers,) "they are in the utmost distress; and they will feel their want of it in the hot weather, when fresh meat will not keep three or four hours." A hundred and thirty thousand bushels of that precious commodity were abandoned as spoil for the victors at the evacuation of Philadelphia. Some Whig townsmen, — who had a reserve store of hard money, and an eye for a falling market, — employed those golden hours in buying up the stocks of Tory merchants intent on flight, for re-sale to General Washington's Commissariat officers; and goods to the value of a hundred and forty thousand pounds, of prime importance to the soldier, were by this operation secured for the use of the Continental Army.

On the eighteenth of June Lord Howe weighed anchor, and proceeded down the river with his war-ships, and chartered merchantmen, in his train. He was accompanied by Lord Carlisle, who was glad to be quit of his city lodging,<sup>1</sup> and quite content to await the inevitable failure of his diplomatic efforts at New York instead of at Philadelphia. The fleet had on board Clinton's sick and wounded, as well as those Bayreuth and Anspach conscripts who had so recently excited the pity of Europe by the miserable story of their mutiny in Franconia. A great number had already deserted; and none of them could be trusted to resist the facilities for evasion which were sure to occur during a prolonged retreat in front of

<sup>1</sup> "I have one of the best houses for my quarters. The gentleman to whom it belongs has still an apartment in it. He is perfectly civil; though I feel distressed at coming into his house without asking his leave, and placing a couple of sentries at his door." Lord Carlisle to Lady Carlisle; Philadelphia, June 8.

a pursuing enemy.<sup>1</sup> Before dawn on that same eighteenth of June, the royal troops in Philadelphia left their quarters, and passed through the streets, and across the ferries, in so quiet and orderly a fashion that the citizens, awaking at their usual hour, were astonished to find the army gone. Towards ten in the morning a party of Major Lee's dragoons galloped down to the quay, only just in time to see the English rear-guard off, as it embarked for the Jersey shore. Sir Henry Clinton took with him across the river forty-six field-pieces, and nearly seventeen thousand men; a most formidable body of soldiers, if only their faces had been turned in the right direction.<sup>2</sup> They were hardy, strong-limbed, and active fellows, — responsive to the leadership, and amenable to the control, of their high-spirited and vigilant regimental officers. Their moral and physical qualities were shrewdly tried during the first ten days of that memorable retreat.

Towards the end of the previous century William Penn, after a few years' experience of the colony that he had founded, ruefully confessed that, in those latitudes, "the weather often changeth without notice, and is constant almost in its inconstancy." During the month of June, 1778, New Jersey maintained the character of the region in which it was situated. When the British reached their second halting-place, the rain poured down for fourteen consecutive hours, ruining the highways, soaking the baggage, spoiling the ammunition and provisions, and drenching the soldiers to their skin. Then came a long spell of the most terrible heat which had afflicted the province within the range of human memory. Many died of sun-stroke; the features of the

<sup>1</sup> The other Germans in Clinton's army preferred to believe that the two wretched battalions were conveyed by water, because they were totally incapable of executing a march on land.

<sup>2</sup> On the third of July, 1778, Sir Henry Clinton had under his command, "fit for duty," 859 officers, 1,114 serjeants, 572 trumpeters and drummers, and 13,907 rank and file; amounting in all to 16,452 men. In the course of the preceding fortnight, the army had been weakened by a severe action, a very trying series of marches, and many desertions.



men were swollen past recognition by mosquito-bites ; and at the end of a day's march, short in distance though long in time, one Hessian out of every three had been left panting and prostrate on the roadside.<sup>1</sup> The infantry, burdened like pack-horses, and clothed and accoutred as for a Birthday parade in a European capital, were kept stationary hour after hour under the blazing sun ; for the train of carts was a dozen miles in length, and frequently travelled on a single causeway.<sup>2</sup> The Americans broke down all the bridges over which the column had to pass ; and Sir Henry Clinton was powerless to hinder the work of destruction. He was very short of cavalry, and the whole country-side was out and about with hostile intentions against him and his army. According to the account given to Lord Carlisle by his military friends, there was not a single Jerseyman, capable of bearing arms, who remained at home. They bestowed their families, and their livestock, in a place of safety ; they cut the ropes of the wells ; and, leaving their crops for the spoiler, and their houses for the torch, they betook themselves, gun in hand, to the woods which bordered the English line of march.<sup>3</sup> The inexorable animosity of the local population made a profound and durable impression upon the mind of the British general. In September 1792, when the Duke of Brunswick was conducting his disastrous campaign against the French Republic, he was attended by Sir Henry Clinton, who in very old days had served him as aide-de-camp. Like causes produce like results ; and, after Clinton had ridden through Champagne for a while with the invading army,

<sup>1</sup> Lowell's *Hessians* ; Chapter 17.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Clinton to Lord George Germaine ; New York, July 5, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Carlisle to Lady Carlisle ; July 21, 1778, New York. "The common people," (wrote Lord Carlisle,) "hate us in their hearts. . . . Formerly, when things went better for us, there was an appearance of friendship by their coming in for pardons ; but, no sooner was our situation the least altered for the worst, but these friends were the first to fire on us ; and many were taken with their pardons in their pockets."

he informed his old chief that the silence of the country, the disappearance of the inhabitants, and their speedy communication of intelligence among each other, made him think that he was on the soil of America during the late rebellion.<sup>1</sup>

The evacuation of Philadelphia was known at Valley Forge by eleven of the clock on the same morning; and Washington forthwith emerged from his lines of Torres Vedras, and started on the track of his departing adversary. Before the afternoon was half over, six of his brigades were on the road to Coryell's Ferry. The Americans crossed the river on the twenty-second June; and two days afterwards the generals were summoned to a Council of War. Their deliberations, (so Alexander Hamilton contemptuously declared,) would have done credit to the Most Honourable Society of Midwives, and to them only. Charles Lee made a flaming speech about building a bridge of gold for a retreating enemy. He exhorted his colleagues to reflect that the French alliance was secured beyond fear of loss; that a general action would inevitably result in an American defeat; and that it would be "criminal" folly to bring a valiant, and highly disciplined, army of British regulars to bay. Most of his audience deferred to the authority of an officer who stood next in rank to the Commander-in-Chief, and whose military reputation dated from the heroic, and already somewhat mythical, period of the Seven Years' War. The Marquis de Lafayette modestly, but manfully, advocated the opposite view, and carried with him Anthony Wayne, always eager for a battle, and Nathanael Greene, whose opinion was worth that of all the others together. The majority of the council advised against an aggressive movement; but they were overruled by Washington, who announced his intention of pushing forward a detachment with orders to follow up the British at close quarters, and use every endeavour to make them turn and fight. Charles Lee solemnly declined to take

<sup>1</sup> Clinton's words are quoted, from the *Annual Register*, by Albert Sorel, in his *History of Europe and the French Revolution*.

any part in a plan of action which, according to his own notion, was sure to fail; and the post of danger and glory was allotted to Lafayette. On the morrow, however, — irresolute even in the abnegation of responsibility, — Lee applied for permission to withdraw his refusal. He had learned in the meanwhile that the advance-guard, henceforward officially known as “the flying army,” was to be a full six thousand strong, and composed of choice troops; and a rumour had reached his ears that Stirling, of whom he was desperately jealous, showed a disposition to put in his claim for the command. Washington referred the decision to Lafayette; and Lee, with the eloquence of despair, made an artful, although not very dignified, appeal to the compassion of the young Frenchman. “I place in your hands,” he said, “my honour and my fortune. You are too generous to wreck both the one and the other.” Lafayette was not hard-hearted enough to reject the entreaties of a famous man, more than twice his own age; and, late at night on the twenty-seventh June, he wrote a letter definitely handing over the command to Lee. The chivalrous Marquis was now to learn, not by any means for the last time in the course of his career, that occasions occur in the management of public affairs when it is quite possible to be too much of a gentleman.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Lee had gained his object, to the ultimate ruin of his personal and military reputation. With no self-knowledge, and no firmness of character, and without even so much as a clear conception whether he wished America or England to win, he had pitted himself against a singularly cool and resolute antagonist. On the twenty-fourth of June Sir Henry Clinton arrived at Allentown, the point from which he intended to strike northward through Brunswick to Perth Amboy, in order to take ship for Staten Island and New York

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hamilton to Elias Boudinot; Brunswick, July 5th, 1778. *Mémoire de ma main, du Général Lafayette.*

city.<sup>1</sup> He had consumed a full week over the first forty miles of his journey. Although his progress was inordinately slow, his route was admirably chosen; for his interminable caravan of waggons had hitherto been protected on the west, which was his vulnerable quarter, by the whole breadth of the Delaware. He was met at Allentown by the intelligence that Washington was already across the river, threatening the flank of his elongated column of march with an army which he knew to be hardly less efficient, and believed to be very much larger, than his own. There were those who urged him to disencumber his movements by destroying the whole of his baggage on the spot; but his military pride forbade that humiliating sacrifice, and he preferred to rely for safety on his own strategical skill, and on the mettle of his soldiers. The promptitude and vigour of his measures left nothing to be desired. Without hesitation he threw his left shoulder forward, and pushed straight east, across the heart of New Jersey, in the direction of Sandy Hook. The road was execrable, and the heat like the desert of Sahara; but Clinton gave his people no respite until, on the twenty-seventh June, his entire force was concentrated round the group of buildings, known as Monmouth Court House, which stood mid-way between the Delaware and the sea. The number and audacity of the riflemen in linen frocks, who swarmed around the British bivouacs, indicated that Colonel Morgan was on the war-path, that Washington himself in all probability was close at hand, and that within the next twenty-four hours the American attack would be driven home. Sir Henry Clinton issued orders that, at day-break next morning, his wheeled vehicles should proceed on their way, escorted by half the army under the command of General von Knyphausen; while Lord Cornwallis, with fourteen battalions and a handful of cavalry, would

<sup>1</sup> Clinton's march from the Delaware to Sandy Hook may be followed, step by step, in the large map at the end of this volume.

keep the enemy in play until the train of baggage had escaped beyond the risk of capture.<sup>1</sup>

Sunday the twenty-eighth of June, 1778, was long remembered all over the United States as the most sultry day which had ever been endured since mankind learned to read the thermometer. Lord Carlisle still lay becalmed in the Delaware River, tired of looking at ships, which were the only sights in view; tormented by "gnats as large as sparrows;" unable to sleep during the stifling night; and unwilling to dine in company because "neither hand could be spared from wiping both neck and face every moment, and at the same time." What was misery and discomfort beneath the awning on a quarter-deck, amounted to nothing less than an ever-present menace of sudden death to soldiers marching in closely packed ranks, or running forward, with gun and knapsack, in the hurry and excitement of battle. The royal camp was astir at an early hour. Not long after midnight, von Knyphausen began to move; and the innumerable carriages gradually wound themselves out of the meadows where they had been parked, and covered, in unbroken file, the whole of the eleven miles of highway which led eastward from Monmouth Court House to the village of Middletown. At eight o'clock Cornwallis took the road, and was already far advanced on his way when Charles Lee came in sight. The American centre was a serried mass of troops, while powerful columns hastened forward, on the right and left, with an evident intention of cutting into the procession of English waggons. Sir Henry Clinton at once discerned that the only possible chance of saving his convoy was to attack, and defeat, the hostile vanguard before their main army could arrive upon the field. He had sure information that Washington was within no great distance; but he reckoned that, if he went to work in the right manner,

<sup>1</sup> An interesting and exact account of Sir Henry Clinton's march is contained in the record, compiled by Colonel Gerald Boyle, which the author has been granted the invaluable privilege of studying.



there would be just time to get the business done. Rising to the height of an arduous situation, he desired Cornwallis to counter-march all his battalions, and deploy them as fast as they returned to the scene of action. No man alive could set a battle in array more artistically and impressively than Lord Cornwallis. The Foot Guards, the Light companies and Grenadier companies, eleven regiments of the line, and some squadrons of Dragoons, advanced across the open fields under cover of a well-sustained fire from their artillery. Charles Lee, as always, was deeply struck by the military appearance of the English infantry; but he would gladly have chosen another point of view from which to enjoy the spectacle. The messages which he despatched to his brigade-commanders, in answer to their request for orders, were dispiriting, and so perplexed as to be almost unintelligible; and, after some hesitation, he set in his own person an inglorious example of the direction in which, under the circumstances, it behoved the troops to march. The Americans were soon in full retreat; and, after some miles had been traversed, that retreat bore a very close resemblance to a rout. Lafayette in vain begged for leave to halt and fight. "Sir," (replied Lee,) "you do not know British soldiers. We cannot stand against them." It was an odd and unsatisfactory way of explaining matters to a very gallant officer who was a Major General in the American army, and a Musketeer of King Louis's Household.<sup>1</sup>

At high noon, a league to the rear of Monmouth Court House, Washington, as he rode towards the sound of the cannon, was encountered by a crowd of his very best troops falling back in confusion from the front. The men, who were sulky and disgusted, muttered something about General Lee's orders; and

<sup>1</sup> When Charles Lee was a prisoner in New York, he told Captain Harris, "nearly crying," that he was mistaken in thinking that the New Englanders would fight. The young man, whose head had already been broken by a New England bullet, was not shaken in his opinion.

none of the superior officers, whom the Commander-in-Chief successively questioned, could give any clear account of what had been going on. He galloped forward until his eye lighted upon Charles Lee himself, upon whom he at once descended "like an avenging deity." Then, for the first and last time on record, there blazed forth one single flash of the fire which always burned beneath that cold and placid exterior. He relentlessly insisted upon an answer to the very obvious inquiry why Lee had ever undertaken a service which he did not so much as attempt to perform; and History, with bated breath, admits that he called the recreant general, to his face, "a damned poltroon." The vigour of his language has been boisterously and triumphantly exaggerated by some of his more graceless admirers; but George Washington's countrymen, for the most part, received the story in awe-struck silence. The matter may safely be left between himself and the Recording Angel.<sup>1</sup>

Washington's presence restored the battle. He rallied two of the retiring battalions, which at his bidding faced about, and set an example of resistance. He gave General Wayne the welcome order to plant his division across the line of Clinton's pursuit. He rode back and forward through a bitter fusillade, recalling his troops to their duty in quiet and well-placed words, and keeping all his aides-de-camp on the move with messages to every general in his army. "I never," said Alexander Hamilton; "saw him to such advantage. What part our family acted, let others say." The officers of Washington's staff,—dashing young Southerners, eager for distinction, and glad of a day off from the monotony of quill-driving,—galloped about into the hottest corners with some damage to themselves, and still more to their horses. There was no slackness in the opposite ranks. Clinton, (as the phrase then was,) "greatly exposed himself," issuing his commands in person amidst the flying bullets. Colonel Harcourt

<sup>1</sup> *Tristram Shandy* ; Volume VI., Chapter 8,

who, all through the retreat from Philadelphia, had made each of his dragoons do the work of three, showed courage and conduct under a heavy fire of grape, and in broken ground almost impracticable for cavalry. The battalion of English Grenadier companies marched steadily up to a range of loop-holed farm buildings, and a well-lined orchard fence. Their colonel was killed, and the American marksmen would not allow them to get within push of bayonet; but they maintained, at very short range, a fierce dispute with the defenders.<sup>1</sup> The British Guards, led by officers who had played a part in the Meschianza, evinced conspicuous gallantry; and Anthony Wayne, in a very characteristic letter, plumed himself on having held his own, in what most certainly was not a mimic combat, against the Knights of the Burning Mountain and the Blended Rose.

Meanwhile the whole of the large American army had arrived upon the field, and was extending itself, from left to right, along a range of wooded hillocks which Sir Henry Clinton perceived to be unassailable. Nathanael Greene, — laying aside the Quartermaster General for that single afternoon, — had planted a battery of cannon on an eminence from which he enfiladed the British line with deadly effect. The long day was far spent. The royal infantry had shot away all their eighty rounds. Their cavalry had been very roughly handled; and the men, of both armies, were dropping by sun-stroke almost as fast as by the enemy's fire. The British General, in his official account of the battle, stated that more than sixty of his soldiers "fell dead as they advanced, without a wound."<sup>2</sup> He withdrew

<sup>1</sup> The Americans in the barn and orchard distinctly heard Colonel Monckton haranguing his people previous to the charge in which he was shot dead. It is said that the grenadiers advanced to the attack with so much precision that a cannon ball, which took the muskets of a platoon in flank, "disarmed every man."

<sup>2</sup> Lord Carlisle was told that several of Clinton's men "ran mad" from the heat. A number of unwounded soldiers were found dead under the alder-bushes along a rivulet where they had crawled for shade and

his troops from the conflict, which was no easy matter; for the English Light Companies, together with a fine regiment of Loyalists entitled The Queen's Rangers, had been carried deep into the enemy's position by their "ungovernable impetuosity," — a fault on the right side which those many hours of heat, and toil, and slaughter had not corrected. The British army retreated, and bivouacked at a distance of ten or twelve furlongs to the rear; while the Americans lay down on their arms, close at hand and in order of battle, with every intention of renewing the engagement at daylight on the morrow.

Washington and Lafayette lay on the same cloak under a bright moon, sleepless among their sleeping soldiers, and talking, (as they well might,) about General Lee, and his recent proceedings. No suspicious sounds caught their ears across the narrow space which separated them from the hostile lines; and yet the royal troops were awake and alert to good purpose. At ten in the evening their leading regiment silently filed away to the eastward; and, by midnight, nothing remained in the British camp except a few badly wounded men and officers, while the rest of the army was already miles away on the road to Middletown. Sir Henry Clinton had gained such a start that his adversaries abandoned the pursuit as hopeless. On the first of July he reached Sandy Hook, where Lord Howe lay at anchor after a very rapid passage from the Capes of the Delaware. Clinton did not take his friends on board the fleet by surprise, for the signs of his approach had been painted in glaring colours on the western horizon. "The army," (wrote Lord Carlisle on the thirtieth of June,) "was not yet arrived. Some fires at a distance, the usual and terrible index of their

water. The royal troops wore thick woollen clothes; whereas many Americans were still in thin rags, and such of them as were better equipped threw down their packs, and fought in their shirt-sleeves. But, even so, they suffered greatly. Washington, on several successive days, reported that the sun had killed some of his men, and many of his horses.

motions, informed us of their position." The course of the departing British through the townships of New Jersey was everywhere marked by a trail of blackened ruins. Clinton, who had the feelings of an honourable soldier, expressed his compunction and disgust in a General Order of remarkable frankness. He thanked his troops for their cheerfulness under fatigue, and their "noble ardour" in battle; but he confessed himself obliged to say that the irregularity of the army during the march had reflected much disgrace on the discipline which ought to be the first object of an officer's attention. Marauding had been ubridled, and desertion rampant. No fewer than six hundred red-coats, of whom more than three fourths were Germans, were walking about the streets of Philadelphia within a fortnight from the day when the royal garrison left the city.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Clinton, however, had reason to congratulate himself on his performance of the work which he had been set to do. He had lost a few hundred men in action; but he had killed and wounded at least as many of the enemy. He brought off all his guns and colours; he saved his baggage; and he reached New York before the French. When Parliament voted thanks to him, and to Lord Cornwallis, an orator of considerable authority informed the House of Commons that Sir Henry Clinton's retirement from Philadelphia was "universally allowed to be the finest thing since the war began." The retreat, beyond all contradiction, had been successful, as retreats go; but it was not precisely the kind of operation which George the Third and his Ministers had in view when they despatched more than fifty thousand soldiers across the Atlantic to subjugate the revolted colonies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Four hundred of them deserted in the first four days. A romantically minded chronicler asserts that they were mostly drawn back to Philadelphia by "tender attachments" which they had formed there during the winter. Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*; Volume II., Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup> Fifty thousand was the popular contemporary estimate of the royal forces sent out to America between 1768 and 1778. Colonel Boyle's



Washington, always prone to leniency in a case where he himself had been injured, or inefficiently served, was disposed to overlook Charles Lee's shortcomings at Monmouth Court House. That general might have retained his military position, and worked fresh mischief to his country's cause, if the usual good fortune of America had not intervened to prevent it. Lee refused to let the question rest, and thought it incumbent on him to send Washington a letter, demanding a Court Martial in grandiloquent phrases, and upbraiding him for his harshness and injustice. "I from my heart believe," he added, "that it was not a motion of your own breast, but instigated by some of those dirty earwigs who will for ever insinuate themselves near persons in high office."<sup>1</sup> The Court Martial was granted; but Lee, as if his situation was not bad enough already, must needs once more address his Commanding Officer in a strain of elaborate and fantastic impertinence. "You cannot," he wrote, "afford me a greater pleasure than in giving men the opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that the temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to offuscate the bright rays of truth." He underwent his trial for disobedience to orders; for writing disrespectful letters to the Commander-in-Chief; and for misbehaviour before the enemy, by making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat. He was found guilty, and suspended from holding any commission in the army for the term of twelve months. The soldiers who, in obedience to his orders, had sullenly and reluctantly turned

detailed calculation places the British troops at something over thirty thousand, and the Germans at something over twenty-one thousand. In the year 1776, upwards of twenty-three thousand men sailed for New York, and eleven thousand five hundred for Canada.

<sup>1</sup> Lee warned the Commander-in-Chief that he could justify his conduct "to the Army, to Congress, to America, and to the World in general." Washington, with grave irony, repeated those exact words in his official answer.

their backs upon a battle, grumbled because he was not sentenced to be shot; but Lee's career was as effectually extinguished as if he had been delivered over to a firing-party of Colonel Morgan's riflemen. He never was re-employed; and he spent the remaining five years of his existence quarrelling with Members of Congress and with officers of the Head Quarters Staff, and inditing satirical attacks on George Washington which everybody read, and nobody heeded. He died as he had lived; for, of all his grotesque literary compositions, his last will and testament was the most preposterous.<sup>1</sup>

The fog at Germantown, and Charles Lee's pusillanimity at Monmouth Court House, had frustrated Washington's hopes of winning an important battle. That, whether by fault or fate, was his usual lot. In the course of the prolonged and dreary struggle for American Independence he scored very few of those master-strokes of victory which elicit a thunder of applause from the crowded benches of the world's amphitheatre. His warlike successes, like his personal qualities, were unostentatious and unsensational, but of great and durable value. On more than one occasion, in the last eighteen months, his strategy had not been dazzling, nor his tactics perfection. Any painstaking military student, without being a Clausewitz or a Jomini, can see that Washington made mistakes, and missed chances; but the final result of his exertions was the total discomfiture of his adversary. The King's troops, after an effort which it was practically certain that they would be unable to repeat, had occupied the capital city of the rebellion, had held it for half a year, and then had abandoned it for ever. The close of the campaign, moreover, had been marked by an incident of still more fatal omen to the royal cause. Sir William Howe's manœuvres, ever since the beginning of the war, had been avowedly, and almost exclusively, directed to the object of compelling the Americans to accept battle

<sup>1</sup> An absurd passage is quoted from this document in a note on page 47 of the preceding volume of this history.

in the open field. "As my opinion," (so he told the House of Commons,) "has always been that the defeat of the rebel army is the surest road to peace, I invariably pursue the most probable means of forcing its commander to an action." But now, at Monmouth Court House, Washington had voluntarily placed himself within the reach of Clinton's sword; and the English general, instead of welcoming the challenge to a combat *à outrance*, had betaken himself out of the country by the nearest way. Conquest is impossible when the main army of the invasion recoils from an opportunity of fighting a decisive battle against the main army of the defence.

Admirable had been the patience and tenacity with which the American leader played the watching and waiting game; and that is a game which must be pursued, obstinately, continuously, and undeviatingly, until the moment is ripe for aggressive action, under penalty of overwhelming disaster.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the whole of the winter Washington had been hampered and harassed by the machinations of political and personal enemies. He knew very well what cruel and cutting things were said in the committee-rooms and lobbies, and even in the debating-chamber, of Congress about his immobility at Valley Forge, and his persistent refusal to assault the British redoubts in front of Philadelphia. The men in power, who for the time being were his employers and his masters, were not ashamed to take a forward part in denying his services, and depreciating his capacity. In their ignorance of war, and of history, they applied to him, by way of derision and reproach, one of the most honoured names in the military annals of the world. The Roman Republic could show an almost interminable list of

<sup>1</sup> "Excellent! Quite excellent! The study of it has given me a greater idea of his genius than any other. Had he continued that system a little while longer he would have saved Paris. But he wanted patience. He did not see the necessity of adhering to defensive warfare. I have been obliged to do it for many months together." That was Wellington's comment on Napoleon's campaign of 1814.

celebrated captains who had won brilliant triumphs, and added rich provinces to the empire ; but the Roman people reserved their highest esteem, and their warmest regard, for the great citizen who, under a cloud of obloquy, had steadfastly and resolutely opposed his own policy of caution to the daring genius of Hannibal. The poet Ennius, in that vigorous Latin which men wrote and spoke at the period of Rome's true greatness, has told how the glory of Fabius increased as the years went on because, when his country was in mortal danger, he paid no attention to the talk of men, and looked only to the safety of the State.<sup>1</sup>

"True history," (wrote an eloquent Frenchman,) "never demolishes a hero. She does not make little that which passes for great. She contents herself with explaining its greatness."<sup>1</sup> This saying, in its relation to George Washington, is strikingly illustrated by the narrative of the long campaign, which lasted from June 1777 to July 1778, and which covered the whole region between Lake Champlain and Delaware Bay. The ultimate success of the American arms, over all that vast theatre of war, was mainly due to Washington's skill and foresight, and, (in a yet more marked degree,) to his elevation of character. He planned a comprehensive scheme of operations ; he distributed the national forces among the generals in command ; he chose for himself the post of difficulty ; and he sent his best troops to the help of others, careless whether he was assisting a friend, or aggrandising a rival. He was the first to predict the capture of Burgoyne's army ; and he devised the measures, and supplied the means, which brought that event to pass. Washington was silent with regard to his own exploits and deserts ; but the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen needed no reminding. They did not forget that, in three successive years, he had thrice expelled the invader from the mainland of

<sup>1</sup> "Non ponebat enim rumores ante salutem.

Ergo magisque, viri nunc gloria crescit."

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Prosper Mérimée.

the United States. "What," asked Horace Walpole, "has an army of fifty thousand men, fighting for sovereignty, achieved in America? Retreated from Boston; retreated from Philadelphia; laid down their arms at Saratoga; and lost thirteen provinces!" That, and nothing less, was the debt which the American Republic owed to the energy, the pertinacity, and the noble self-forgetfulness of George Washington.



## CHAPTER X

EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION. CHOISEUL. VERGENNES.  
TURGOT

GRAVER news had seldom crossed the Atlantic; although the latest occurrences in America were not closely studied in London, and their full import was understood only by the wise. Hopes had been excited by Burgoyne's first successes, by Howe's victory on the Brandywine, and by the capture of Philadelphia. The catastrophe at Saratoga had been received with disappointment, and with something very nearly approaching to dismay. But Sir Henry Clinton's retirement on New York, which was the most significant event in the whole war, attracted little attention in English society, and scanty comment in the press.

Week after week, and month after month, during the late spring and early summer of 1778, our newspapers gave very meagre information about the British army on the Delaware; for the mind of Britain was already distracted by problems demanding more instant attention, and by dangers much nearer to her own shores. The Morning Chronicle, and the Evening Post, related the battle of Monmouth Court House at less length than they bestowed upon a sham-fight at the great militia camp which had been formed on Cox Heath, in Kent, to provide against the imminent contingency of a French invasion. Towards the end of July, an anxious public were informed that very heavy firing had been heard off the Lizard. "Yesterday," (so the paragraph ran,) "a report confidently prevailed, which God forbid that a tithe should be true, that Admiral Keppel had been beat in a general engage-

ment.”<sup>1</sup> The rumour of a battle was premature ; and, when it did take place, it was claimed as an English victory, though among the very poorest in our naval annals ; but we may well believe that, during a week when home-news of this description floated in the air, men were not inclined to devote much, attention or regret, to the evacuation of Philadelphia.

For two centuries back, on many critical occasions, England's foreign and warlike policy had presented a very noble record. Queen Elizabeth assisted the United Provinces of Holland, in their utmost need, against the bigotry and cruelty of Spain. Oliver Cromwell interfered in Continental matters, with decisive effect, in the interests of justice, humanity, and religious freedom. The war which William the Third fought out to the end, and the subsequent war which he commenced, and which Marlborough prosecuted, were both of them set going with the express object of protecting weak European communities from the unscrupulous and insatiable ambition of Louis the Fourteenth. It was true, indeed, that George the Second's two great wars had been undertaken by the British Cabinet from mixed motives, amongst which national self-interest certainly found a place ; but in both cases an honourable, a generous, and a disinterested idea possessed and actuated the great mass of Englishmen. Such an idea unquestionably inspired the exertions and sacrifices made by our forefathers in 1742, and during the five years that followed ;—the vast subsidies transmitted to Vienna from the British Treasury ; the glorious victory of Dettingen ; the still more glorious reverse of Fontenoy ; and the visit of Commodore Martin's squadron to the Bay of Naples, which was an exploit conceived, and conducted to a bloodless but triumphant issue, in the very spirit and style of the Great Protector. The main thought and intention of our people in that arduous struggle was a determination to save the young Em-

<sup>1</sup> *The London Daily Advertiser* ; July 24, 1778.

press Queen from insult and spoliation, and to prevent the balance of power from being irremediably upset by the ruin and dissolution of Austria. And Chatham's war, which in America and the East secured enormous acquisitions of territory for his country, presented on the Continent of Europe, (and not unjustly,) the appearance of a public-spirited, and even a chivalrous, enterprise. English troops fought loyally and most successfully, and English guineas were not stinted, in order to strengthen the hands of Prussia against the most powerful combination of military States that ever, for so many years together, applied themselves in concert to the business of annihilating a puny neighbour.<sup>1</sup>

These striking events, and this all but continuous course of magnanimous policy, had landed England in a position more desirable than has ever been enjoyed by any nation in modern times; and for which a parallel can only be found in the fame and popularity of Athens after she had repelled the Persian invasion, and before she had begun to tyrannise over her Greek allies. When the Seven Years' War came to a termination, the influence of England throughout the Continent of Europe was immense; her power on the high seas was undisputed; and, together with these advantages, she had contrived to retain a large measure of the

<sup>1</sup> Hard words have often been applied to the doctrine of the Balance of Power; but, during the century which followed the Revolution of 1688, that doctrine excited almost as much enthusiasm as was evoked, in the nineteenth century, by the principle of Nationality. The efforts to preserve Europe from the acquisitiveness of France or Austria inspired Englishmen, in the days of Marlborough and Chatham, with the same kind of sympathy as their descendants felt for the Independence of Greece, and the Unity of Italy. Robertson published his *Charles the Fifth* in 1769; and his *Introductory Essay on the Progress of Society in Europe*, which filled the first volume, contains many allusions to the theory of the Balance of Power. The historian apparently regarded that theory as among the most beneficent discoveries of a civilised era. "That salutary system," (thus he described it,) "which teaches modern politicians to take the alarm at the prospect of distant dangers, which prompts them to check the first encroachments of any formidable power, and which renders each state the guardian, in some degree, of the rights and independence of all its neighbours."

general good-will. She had drawn the sword so often, and wielded it so efficaciously, on behalf of others, that the governments, which she had protected and rescued on the European mainland, seldom grudged her those provinces and colonies which she had founded, or appropriated, in distant quarters of the globe.

"I shall do well !

The people love me, and the sea is mine ;  
My powers are crescent ; and my auguring hope  
Says it will come to the full."<sup>1</sup>

England, after the Peace of Paris in 1763, might very fairly have applied to herself these verses of her own greatest poet. Feared and hated by some nations, esteemed and even beloved by others, she was everywhere respected, admired, and imitated. Nowhere was she so obsequiously watched and followed as in the capital city of her ancient, and her most formidable, foe. "What Cromwell wished," (thus Gibbon wrote in March 1763,) "is now literally the case. The name of Englishman inspires as great an idea at Paris as that of Roman could at Carthage after the defeat of Hannibal." The more frivolous of the French nobility copied and borrowed our simple dress, our less gaudy and far swifter carriages, our games at cards, the implements of our national sports, and the jargon of our race-course, — so far as they could frame their lips to pronounce it. Those among them who were of more exalted nature, and tougher fibre, envied the individual liberty and responsible self-government which prevailed in England, and the opportunities there afforded for a strenuous and worthy public career. The pride of young French gentlemen, (wrote the scion of a great family in Périgord,) was piqued by the contrast between their own situation, and that of men of their age and class beyond the Channel. "Our minds dwelt upon the dignity, the independence, the useful and important existence of an English peer, or of a Member

<sup>1</sup> *Anthony and Cleopatra* ; Act II., Scene I.

of the House of Commons, and upon the proud and tranquil freedom which appertained to every citizen of Great Britain.”<sup>1</sup>

Such was the towering eminence which Britain proudly occupied; and it is an inevitable condition of national greatness that conspicuous States, on which the attention of mankind is concentrated, have to mind their ways at home, as well as abroad. Small or effete countries may be well or ill governed, their ministers and even their monarchs may come and go, and their constitutions may be reformed or overset, without attracting any considerable amount of observation outside their own confines; but the politics of a people who lead the world are regarded, all the world over, as matter of universal interest and concern. The top-heavy edifice of personal government, — which George the Third, through the instrumentality of Bute, and Grafton, and North, had built up from the foundation, — was a familiar, and not a lovely, phenomenon to educated men in every capital of Europe. All true friends, and some high-minded enemies, of England deplored that the energies of our rulers should be devoted to unworthy, and worse than unprofitable, objects, and witnessed with sincere regret the long roll of sordid and demoralising incidents which marked the trail of the Middlesex Election. It was a sorry spectacle to see the Government of a people which had humbled France and Spain, had defended Germany, and had conquered Canada and Bengal, wasting its efficiency and its credit, twelvemonth after twelvemonth, over a miserable squabble with the voters of

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires par M. Le Comte de Ségur, de l'Académie Française, Pair de France*: Deuxième Edition, page 140.

A young Englishman of good family, writing in the year 1774, described how he left London, where his father never got back from Parliament till long after midnight, and spent his whole morning correcting his speech for the newspapers; and how in Paris he found men of the highest birth leading a life of unbroken leisure, — calling occasionally on the King's Ministers, to exchange a few compliments, but otherwise knowing as little about the public affairs of France as of Japan.



one very ill-used English county. England, before this, had had her faults and her misfortunes; but since the Revolution of 1688, alone among the principal nations of the world, she had been ruled by strong men who forced their way to the front by prowess in debate, by valuable public services, and by the favourable estimate which their fellow-countrymen formed of their wisdom and capacity. That, however, was the case no longer. Second-rate, and third-rate, place-holders now trifled with the welfare and honour of the country; while their betters were inexorably excluded from office because they were unacceptable to the King. Patriots and statesmen like Edmund Burke, Lord Camden, and Sir George Savile, were left unemployed; and England was governed by such sinister or paltry figures as Sandwich and Rigby, Lord Weymouth and Lord George Germaine.

This disastrous condition of things was vividly brought home to the perception of Europe by the notoriety of Lord Chatham's disfavour at Court. The ex-minister, whose commanding genius had laid France at the feet of England, was incomparably the most highly regarded of English citizens, all the Continent over; and nowhere was that sentiment so pronounced as in France itself. French people of fashion were for ever pestering British tourists for an authentic anecdote about Pitt, or for a few specimen sentences from his latest oration; and the presence during a single evening of one among his kinsmen, or even his parliamentary supporters, was of itself sufficient to make the fortune of any drawing-room in Paris. Lord Chatham's reputation as a public speaker was never so widely diffused as during the later stages of the Wilkes controversy, and the opening scenes of the American Revolution. Magnificent fragments of his rhetoric, dating from that period, are not even yet submerged in the sea of oblivion which, mercifully for human endurance, in most cases drowns the oratory of the past; and samples of his eloquence, while it still was fresh,

were freely quoted, and enthusiastically admired, by foreigners who had learned to read our language. And now, at the summit of his fame,—in the prime, as Berlin and Paris believed, of his intellect and his vigour,—he was denied the opportunity of governing his native island, and saving from dismemberment that Colonial empire which he had enlarged and strengthened, for no other public reason than because he stood, squarely and manfully, for the independence of the British Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

For some years before the American Revolution broke out, the influence of England abroad had been sapped and weakened by the growing deterioration of her internal politics. And now, after a decade marked by maladministration and popular discontent at home, the new methods of government had produced their appropriate fruit in the alienation of our colonies. On that question one and the same view was held by every rational foreigner, and was pointedly expressed by those French writers who then were the recognised interpreters of European thought. "Your ministers," wrote the Abbé Morellet to Lord Shelburne, "have not perceived that, by enslaving and ruining America, they are drying up an abundant source of wealth and prosperity, of which England would always have secured the largest share; for such would have been the happy consequence of natural and unforced relations between a mother-country, and a colony inhabited by a people

<sup>1</sup> While Horace Walpole was at Paris, in the autumn of 1765, his correspondence is full of casual, and occasionally very humorous, allusions to the awe with which William Pitt was regarded in that city. "The night before last," (Walpole wrote to Pitt's sister,) "I went to the Luxembourg; and, *if I had conquered America in Germany*, I could not have been received with more attention." Walpole gave an unlucky Scotch baronet a very bad half-hour by assuring a party of eager, and curious, fine ladies, most untruthfully, that the poor gentleman was an excellent mimic, and could reproduce Pitt's speaking better than any man alive. When the terrible wolf of the Gevaudan was brought dead to Paris, the animal lay in state in the Queen's antechamber, and "was exhibited to us with as much parade as if it was Mr. Pitt."

sprung from her race, and speaking her tongue. Those ministers resemble a territorial landlord who, in order to maintain certain honorary rights which bring him in little or no cash, should make war on his own tenants, impounding their teams and setting fire to their barns, with the result that his farmers would thenceforward be unable to till their fields, and pay their rent." It is true that, in our own day, an author may occasionally be found, in one country or another, who defends the policy of Lord North's cabinet as having been laudable and judicious. But, while the affair was actually in progress, all the civilised world outside our own island held that policy to be wrong and foolish: and it is the opinion of contemporaries, and not of posterity, which has an influence on the issue of the event.

Then came the Declaration of Independence. There exists among mankind an innate disposition to believe that people know their own business best, and a readiness to accept the description which they give of themselves in preference to any which is given of them by others. When America, speaking with an exuberant emphasis which had no example in the State-papers of the Old World, asserted for herself a separate and distinct place among the family of nations, there was a general inclination, all Europe over, to take her at her word, and acknowledge her right to be the arbitress of her own destiny, and the mistress of her own future. The claim which she embodied in her famous manifesto was soon made good by arms. Thrice had Great Britain put forth her full strength against the colonists, and three campaigns had been fiercely contested. In the first campaign King George lost Boston; the second had ended with the defeat of his German auxiliaries at Trenton; and the third had resulted in one of his armies being captured, while the other was driven back into the city of New York. What had hitherto been the suppression of a rebellion now became, in the eyes of foreign critics, the invasion of a country. The conflict was regarded no longer as a civil war, but as a war of con-

quest : and conquest is never popular except among the conquerors.<sup>1</sup>

The English had hitherto been regarded by other nations as the most sagacious people of modern times. A century and a half of bold and judicious colonisation, and three quarters of a century made notable by a series of amazingly prosperous wars, had secured for them nearly all the outlying districts of the globe that were then worth having. Their proceedings had been characterised by instinctive common-sense, and by obedience to the laws of a broadly considered and sound economy. All those immense enterprises, which they had undertaken and carried through, were well within their compass, and amply repaid them for their ungrudging expenditure of that public money which, at the decisive hour, they never spared. But now, in profound peace, at the height of unparalleled prosperity, they had committed themselves to an internal war against a part of their own empire, — a war marked by all the folly of a Crusade, without the piety, — of which the end must be distant, and the event, whatever shape it might ultimately assume, could not fail to be calamitous to Great Britain. The national reputation for prudence and shrewdness was grievously impaired in the eyes of Europe; and our countrymen had thrown away a yet more valuable advantage than that of ranking as the cleverest race in history. The Declaration of Independence had aroused an unusual emotion in the mind of Europe. Jefferson's lofty and glowing phrases resounded through France and Germany in accents strange and novel, but singularly, and even mysteriously, alluring to the ear. The depressed

<sup>1</sup> Albert Sorel, in his account of the repulse of Brunswick's invasion, makes an interesting allusion to the respect felt in Europe for the young American Republic, after it had successfully endured the baptism of fire:

“ Les Français ont supporté l'épreuve décisive, celle qui a fait la ruine des Polonais, et la puissance des Américains. Cette nation a vu les étrangers sur son territoire, et elle est restée unie, inébranlable dans ses idées. Il faut renoncer au fol espoir d'enchaîner une nation entière.”

and unprivileged classes in a feudal society, which already had arrived within half a generation of the uprising and overturn of 1789, hailed with delight from across the ocean that audacious proclamation of their own silent hopes and lurking sympathies. In previous wars England had figured as a champion of the weak, and a fearless asserter of the common liberties against the misuse of power by any State, or conspiracy of States; but now, to the sorrow of her admirers, she was committed to the task of crushing the political life out of a group of Republics which, in the view of Europe, had as much right to free and uncontrolled self-government as the cantons of Switzerland. She had forfeited the general respect and esteem which formerly was her portion; and she was to learn ere long that, at a grave conjuncture, respect and esteem are among the most valuable military assets upon which a nation can reckon.

Certain incidents of the American war, — which were forced upon the attention of the European populations, and in some respects very seriously affected their comfort, their security, and their commercial interests, — aggravated that disapproval of King George's policy which they so early, and so generally, felt. The more powerful and self-respecting governments blamed and despised those petty princes who had sold their troops for service against our revolted colonists; while all civilians, and almost all true soldiers, were profoundly shocked by the cruelty and injustice inseparable from the traffic. "The Anspach and Bayreuth regiments were put on board boats at Ochsenfurt; but so closely packed that many of the men had to stand up all night. We sang hymns, and had prayers. The next day, many of the men threatening to refuse, the non-commissioned officers were ordered to use heavy whips to enforce obedience, and later to fire on the malcontents, so that some thirty were wounded." That is the account given by no political agitator, but by a musketeer who served King George bravely, and not at all reluctantly, throughout the later years of the American



war.<sup>1</sup> It was little wonder if such scenes as these,—occurring along the main roads of Europe, and on the banks of her navigable rivers, at a time when there was peace within her own borders,—filled quiet, kindly citizens with pity and disgust. The Margrave of Anspach, who had been called in to quell the mutiny, escorted his troops to the seaport where they were embarked for New York; and it is on record that he was hooted by mobs, and pelted with reproachful epithets, in the streets of every Dutch town which he traversed on his homeward journey.

So it was on land; and, in the department of maritime affairs, the American war speedily kindled burning questions which flared up into something not far short of a universal conflagration. The sudden and complete extinction of the great, the increasing, and the exceptionally profitable trade between England and her colonies opened out an enticing prospect to the cupidity of foreign manufacturers and foreign ship-owners. Warlike stores rose at once to famine prices in America; and, if the rebellious colonies had not the hard dollars wherewith to pay those prices, at any rate there was plenty of Virginian tobacco which might be exported as a substitute for gold and silver. The multitude of New England sailors, who in former wars had helped to man British fleets, now shipped themselves on board the privateers which preyed upon British commerce. Privateering on a large scale, and in distant waters, is impracticable unless captains of predatory vessels can find a port in which they are allowed to sell their prizes; and such ports, situated in the European territories, or the colonial dependencies, of France, and Spain, and Holland, were soon placed at the disposal of the American corsairs with the con-

<sup>1</sup> *Stephen Popp's Journal*, 1777-1783; published by Joseph G. Rosen-garten. After relating the mournful and clamorous partings between the young villagers, and the parents from whom they were torn, the writer goes on to say: "Some of the soldiers were glad, and I was of their number, for I had long wanted to see something of the world."

nivance of the local authorities. Under these circumstances the British Government had recourse to their own interpretation of the code which regulated the power of naval search, and the enforcement of naval blockades. They insisted upon a large, and in some cases a very disputable, extension of the list of articles included in the category of Warlike Stores; and their narrow and rigid definition of the immunities to be enjoyed by neutral vessels was much more agreeable to the captains of their own frigates than to Dutch, or Danish, or Scandinavian, or Russian ship-owners and ship-masters. Britain, in all particulars, revived and put in practice the extreme theory of her maritime rights; and such was the nature of the world-wide contest in which she was engaged that it was difficult for her, if not impossible, to allow those rights to sleep.

Every week that sped, — and, as the war progressed, almost every day, — brought the news of some high-handed act on the one side, and some flagrant breach of the impartiality due from non-combatants on the other. On the deep seas, at the mouth of a Baltic estuary, or off the bar of a West Indian harbour, transactions were passing which continually added fuel to the flame of international resentment. The British people, sometimes with more anger than uneasiness, saw one European neighbour after another converted into an overt enemy, or, at best, into a malevolent and bitterly prejudiced umpire. Before the close of 1780 she was at war with three of the naval Powers; and the others had drawn themselves together into a league which called itself *The Armed Neutrality*, but which had very little that was neutral about it outside the title. Portugal alone retained, — and, (grateful little nation that she was,) for a long time ventured to manifest, — her ancient predilection for our country; but the pressure at length became too strong for her fidelity, and Portugal threw in her lot with the rest. Benjamin Franklin could truthfully write from Paris that

England had no friends on that side of the Straits of Dover, and that no nation wished her success, but rather desired to see her effectually humbled. Nor was disapprobation of Lord North's action in America confined to Continental, or to foreign, lands; for that sentiment had long been dominant in Ireland. The Catholics indeed, so far as in their sad and depressed condition they had any politics at all, were mostly for King George as against the Whig opposition and the Philadelphia Congress. But, throughout all the four Irish provinces, the coercion of New England was intensely distasteful to the public opinion of the governing classes; and in that century, and that country, Protestant and Landlord opinion alone counted. "I heard t'other day," said Horace Walpole, "from very good authority that all Ireland was 'America mad.' That was the expression. It was answered: 'So is all the Continent.' Is it not odd that this island should, for the first time since it was five years old, be the only country in Europe in its senses?"<sup>1</sup>

By the time that our American rebellion had lasted a twelvemonth, Great Britain could not count upon any friend, or any possible ally, among the leading European nations; while the most powerful of them all was her busy and irreconcilable enemy. France, for a long while back, had been in that mood which renders a proud and gallant people the most dangerous of neighbours to a victorious rival. Chatham, and his English, had wrenched away her colonies, had expelled her from North America, and had ousted her from any prospect of influence or empire in the peninsula of Hindostan. Her troops had been often and disgracefully beaten, her squadrons driven off the ocean, her commerce annihilated, and her finances ruined. Her consciousness of inferiority was kept alive by the humiliations to which she was subjected in her intercourse with other Powers. She was

<sup>1</sup> Walpole to the Countess of Ossory; Strawberry Hill, June 25, 1776.

still obliged, in one of her own home ports, to endure the presence and the supervision of a British Commissioner, whose duty it was to assure himself that no fortifications were erected on the front which faced the sea.<sup>1</sup> So weak that she could not insist upon her right to take a hand in the game of European diplomacy, she was forced to overlook and condone the lucrative iniquities which, in the black and shameful year of 1772, Russia, Austria, and Prussia combined to perpetrate at the expense of a feeble and unhappy nation. It was impossible, (said Lafayette,) for Frenchmen of a later generation even to conceive the political and military nullity to which their country had been reduced by the Seven Years' War, and by her enforced acquiescence in the partition of Poland.

France had suffered terribly, and had been stripped bare ; but she had learned self-knowledge in the school of misfortune, and was quietly and resolutely intent upon recovering the self-respect which she had lost. The more thoughtful and capable among her statesmen, her sailors, and her soldiers were assiduously engaged in amending the discipline, and increasing the fighting strength of her fleets and armies. The master-workman in the task of national recuperation and reconstruction was the Duc de Choiseul. A politician, who aspires to be a ruler, must travel towards his goal by the avenues which are in customary use in his own country, and among his own contemporaries ; and Choiseul had risen to the summit of affairs, — as openly and avowedly as an English nobleman would set himself to gain place and power by making speeches in Parliament, — through the good graces of a Royal mistress. He was a prime favourite, and a most serviceable partisan, of Madame de Pompadour ; but none the less was he a genuine patriot. He had his full share in the onerous responsibility of starting the Seven Years' War, and he did not

<sup>1</sup> A stipulation to this effect with regard to the port of Dunkirk, dating from the Peace of Utrecht, was revived and reëstablished in the year 1763 by a special article in the Treaty of Paris.

greatly shine in the conduct of it; but he had taken to heart the stern lessons which that war had taught. In 1761, — the mid period of the struggle, when the naval power of France had already been destroyed, — Choiseul, with rare foresight and fixity of purpose, commenced the building of war-vessels on an extensive scale, and continued to build with redoubled vigour after hostilities terminated. By the year 1770 sixty-four French sail of the line, and fifty frigates, were actually afloat.<sup>1</sup> When once the ships were provided, there was no lack of men. Colbert had long ago devised, and Choiseul had now perfected, an accurate register of the entire sea-going population; and a rigorous, but equitable, conscription obviated the necessity of the press-gang, and supplied the war-fleet with the very pick and flower of French sailors. A matter of hardly less importance, when dealing with an element where, after seamanship has done its very utmost, cannon must decide the day, was the organisation of a marine artillery; and the French Admiralty in 1767 enlisted a body of ten thousand naval gunners, “systematically drilled once a week during the ten years still to intervene before the next war with England.”<sup>2</sup>

Choiseul's ships were built to encounter the battle and the storm, and they were handled by officers who understood and loved their calling. Unwarmed by the beams of Court favour, and patient and loyal under the vexation of cruelly slow promotion, they were as blunt and rough, as brave and manly, and as whole-hearted in their devotion to duty, as the heroes of Tobias Smollett's naval stories. True sea-dogs, or rather sea-wolves, (for so their countrymen preferred to call them,)<sup>3</sup> they knocked about the Gulf of Lyons and the

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de La Marine Française*, par E. Chevalier; Livre I., Chapitre 2.

<sup>2</sup> Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power upon History*; Chapter 9. Chevalier; Préface, Livre I.

<sup>3</sup> The Memoirs of the Duc des Cars give a most interesting picture of his valiant brother, who was “un vrai loup de mer, et d'un naturel extrêmement sec.”



Bay of Biscay in all weathers, and on every sort of errand. According to their notion it was better for King Louis that he should lose a few spars and top-sails, or even an occasional ship's company of sailors, than that his frigates should lie safe and idle in harbour with inexperienced captains, and crews who were no better than landsmen. And so it came about that the French marine was never so efficient, before or since, as at the commencement of the war which arose out of the American Revolution; while the sea power of Great Britain had been brought down to a very low point by the incompetence and heedlessness of the British Cabinet. Lord North and Lord Sandwich starved the dockyards, and reduced the seamen, at a time when they were pursuing a Colonial policy which plunged their country into a desperate contest with all the other great navies of the world. Howe and Rodney, by consummate strategy and splendid victories, at length restored the maritime supremacy of England; but, during the space of four years, the French fleets and squadrons, commanded by zealous and enterprising Admirals,—and in the case of the Bailli de Suffren, by a naval leader of very high quality,—held their own, and something more than their own, in the Mediterranean Sea, and on the Atlantic and Indian oceans.

A scantier measure of success attended Choiseul's efforts to regenerate the army, which had become a veritable hot-bed of privilege, of indolence, and of almost unfathomable incapacity. There was a sharp and striking contrast between the conditions under which Frenchmen served their King on land and on water. The Chevalier des Cars, who afterwards became the Duke, began his career in life as a naval officer; and, as has happened to others, he made all the better soldier for it afterwards. While he was still a sailor, the young fellow injured his health during two hard winters at sea in the narrow quarters, and the ineffable discomfort, of an eighteenth century cruiser. Then

he obtained a commission in the Cavalry; and, after a short apprenticeship with his regiment, he repaired to Paris, where he led an agreeable existence amidst a round of theatres and supper-parties, varied by excursions to Versailles with the object of taking part in the royal stag-hunts, and dancing attendance on the Comte d'Artois. The Chevalier was nominated a Colonel of Dragoons within a year and a half of the time when he first joined the army; and, on the evening of the same day, he had the enviable honour of being selected from a crowd of courtiers to hold the candle while the King was undressing. In the meanwhile his elder brother, the Baron des Cars, who had served with credit through the whole of the long English war, and had more than once commanded a frigate, still ranked as a plain lieutenant. If the Baron had been a musketeer, or a Gendarme, of the Royal Household he might have been a Major General at five and twenty. All the coveted prizes of a military career were for men, and sometimes even for children, of quality.<sup>1</sup> The upper grades in a French regiment were occupied by Viscounts and Marquises; while the hard work was done by veterans of low degree, and often of great though ill-rewarded merit, who were distinguished from their high-born comrades by the somewhat ironical appellation of "officers of fortune."<sup>2</sup> It must be admitted that troops so commanded were queer allies for the sturdy and uncompromising Republicans of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

The French army, with all its faults, contained

<sup>1</sup> The Comte de Ségur's father commanded a regiment when only nineteen years of age. A son of the Maréchal de Richelieu was made a colonel at seven; and his Major was a boy of twelve.

<sup>2</sup> This invidious system was resuscitated in the French army after the Restoration. Paul Louis Courier, in the year 1820, represents himself as comforting an old Sergeant Major, who had fought under Napoleon, by reminding him that he might some day be an officer. "An officer of fortune!" was the reply. "You little know what that means! I had rather drive a plough than become a lieutenant in my own regiment in order to be bullied by the nobles."

plenty of valour and chivalry; and Choiseul exerted himself to introduce into it any reforms and improvements which were compatible with the aristocratic character of the military hierarchy. Close attention was thenceforward bestowed upon the recruiting, the re-mounts, the drill, the manoeuvres, the clothing, and the weapons. Regiments of the line, one and all, were dressed in the same uniform; and in 1777 the infantry were supplied with a type of musket so excellent that, after some alterations in the mechanism, it held its ground through the Napoleonic wars, and up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The new firelock weighed only eleven pounds, which in those days was a miracle of lightness; and when, (as was ordinarily the case in battle,) a soldier dispensed with the ceremony of taking aim, he could discharge five shots a minute.<sup>1</sup> The officers were encouraged to instruct themselves in the tenets of the Potsdam school, which was then supposed to be in possession of all attainable human knowledge relating to the science of war. The great master of that school, however, took very good care that only a few exoteric fragments of his doctrine should be imparted to his foreign disciples. French colonels and generals were at full liberty to borrow the Prussian methods of manipulating troops on parade; but they were allowed to learn from Frederic the Great "nothing except his most elementary and least essential lessons."<sup>2</sup> A French Minister of War, in the enthusiasm of imitation, empowered regimental officers to adopt the German custom of chastising privates with the flat of the sabre; as if that peculiar institution had been the secret of victory at Zorndorf and at Rossbach. Two subalterns of high birth and great promise, who afterwards were admirable soldiers, went so far as to shut themselves up in their lodgings, and belabour each other, turn and turn about, until they had ascertained

<sup>1</sup> *Bonaparte en Italie*: Felix Bouvier; Chapitre I, Section 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires par M. Le Comte de Ségur*; Paris, 1825; Tome I., Page 128.

"the impression made by blows from the flat of the sword upon a strong, brave, and healthy man." The discussion of military problems became the fashion of the day, even beyond exclusively military circles; and a dispute which raged over the question of the attack in column, and the attack in line, aroused almost as keen partisanship in Paris as the musical controversy between the faction of Gluck, and the faction of Piccini.

Choiseul, with the vigilance of a practised diplomatist, had long watched for an opportunity of bringing about a collision with England. During the later months of 1770 a difficulty arose, in reference to the Falkland Islands, between the British and the Spanish governments; and the Bourbon of Spain was prepared to assert his claim by arms, if the Bourbon of France would back him in the quarrel. Choiseul used every endeavour to prevent an amicable settlement, and to create a war; but his day of Court favour, and backstairs influence, was past and gone. The bright, particular star which was then dominant,—the cynosure by which every wary French statesman was careful to steer his course,—shone with a pacific, and not with a red and angry, lustre. Madame de Pompadour, in days gone by, had consented to plunge France into war if only the Empress of Austria would call her cousin. But Madame du Barry, unlike her more ambitious predecessor, was frankly and contentedly disrespectable. Unable to induce as many as six French ladies of rank to visit her, she entertained no hope whatever of being admitted into the family of European sovereigns.<sup>1</sup> She detested Choiseul as a serious man, and a masterful minister; as a kill-joy in the class of society which frequented her apartments; and as an advocate of large armaments, and of an open breach with England. Madame du Barry had learned just enough of politics to be aware that a war would cost a great deal of

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third*; Volume IV., Chapter 8.

money, and would render it less easy for her to lay her hands on the millions of crowns which were indispensable to her jovial, and prodigal, existence. She made up her mind that Choiseul should go; and a change of government was effected by that process which France, in the reign of Louis the Fifteenth, regarded as the strict constitutional method. The King's mistress said a word to an Abbé who had access to the royal ear; the Abbé suggested a course of action to the King; and the King summoned the minister into his presence, and demanded an account of the international situation. When Choiseul had expounded his policy, his sovereign's face "became livid, and he cried out in a fury, 'Monsieur, I have told you that I would not have a war.'" Choiseul was dismissed from office; the disagreement about the Falkland Islands was patched up; and a belief that peace was secured, until the throne of France had another occupant, universally prevailed in Paris, and in London likewise. At Brooks's club, in May 1774, Mr. Edward Foley betted Mr. Charles Fox fifty guineas that England would be at war with France "before this day two years, supposing Louis the Fifteenth dead." Almost in the same month, the same view was expressed by a much greater man. "I little thought," (so Lord Chatham wrote from his Somersetshire home,) "that I should form daily wishes for the health and life of His Most Christian Majesty. I believe now that no French subject of the masculine gender prays so devoutly for the preservation of his days as I do, in my humble village. I consider the peace as hanging on this single life, and that life not worth two years' purchase."

If wars of retaliation can be staved off during a sufficient period of time, the most passionate aspirations for reprisal and revenge may die away, and be succeeded by friendlier sentiments. That,



within our own experience, has been the case with the French Republic and the German Empire; and the same circumstances might have produced the same happy effect on the relations between France and England in the generation which followed the conclusion of the Peace of Paris. Frenchmen, smarting under recent defeat, cherished the notion of a fresh appeal to the ordeal of battle; but prudence kept them quiet. The warlike power of Great Britain was enormous; and the British colonies in America, growing rapidly in wealth and population, were more than ever capable of contributing, in the day of need, a most formidable addition to the naval and military strength of the mother-country. If only the concert between the whole English-speaking race, on both sides of the Atlantic, remained unbroken, France might in the end have accepted the accomplished fact, and diverted her energies from the preparations of war to the pursuits of peace. But the statesmanship of George the Third's ministers proved unequal to the task of keeping the national inheritance bound together in voluntary and indissoluble union; and the revolt of our colonies afforded an irresistible temptation to the martial ardour, and the patriotic resentment, of the French army and the French people.

When the Americans flew to arms in the early months of 1775, there was already a new reign in France; and there was a new France also. Nothing so instantaneous, nothing so exceptional and peculiar in its character, as the intellectual Renaissance which immediately followed upon the death of Louis the Fifteenth has occurred in any age or country. The influence of the movement was most visible in the privileged class; but that class was a nation in itself, for it included a hundred and forty thousand men and women, belonging to at least five and twenty thousand noble families.<sup>1</sup> Never, (wrote a most able historian,) did a generation attain its majority with an equipment of ideas

<sup>1</sup> *L'Ancien Régime*, par H. Taine, de l'Académie Française; Chapitre II., Section I.

and impressions more utterly opposed to those of their parents than the sons of the French nobility during the opening years of Louis the Sixteenth's reign.<sup>1</sup> It was a generation which had read, or at all events had bought, the *Encyclopædia*; which derived its views on public right and public policy from Montesquieu, its emotions and aspirations from Rousseau, and its theology from the *Philosophical Dictionary* of Voltaire. Frenchmen of good family, who survived the great Revolution, looked regretfully and wistfully back to the artificial, irresponsible, and the intensely enjoyable lives which they led towards the beginning of the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Unobservant of the ominous fact that doctrines, with which they amused themselves as a pastime, had permeated those vast masses of their less fortunate dependents and inferiors to whom Freedom, and Equality, and Justice were terms fraught with very serious meaning indeed, the younger nobles, fearless about the future, extracted the quintessence of all that was delightful from every phase and aspect of the present. On their country estates, among their peasants, and land-stewards, and gamekeepers, they still retained a substantial remnant of feudal power. At Versailles they basked in the sunshine of the Court, and secured their share of places, and pensions, and promotions. When they repaired to the camp, the mere possession of a great name placed them in the highest ranks of the military service. And meanwhile they held themselves free to mingle, at Parisian supper-tables, with all that was brilliant in untitled circles on terms of a pleasant imitation of plebeian equality. That is the picture drawn long afterwards by one of their own number. "We passed," (so the Comte de Ségur wrote,) "the short years of our spring-time in a round of illusions. Liberty, royalty, aristocracy, democracy, ancient prejudices, bold and unfettered thought, novelty and privilege, luxury and philosophy, — everything conspired to render our days happy; and never was

<sup>1</sup> Doniol's *History*; Volume I., Page 635.

a more terrible awakening preceded by sweeter sleep, and by more seductive dreams." <sup>1</sup>

The solitary grievance of these young patricians was that they were excluded from the government of the State; for it was an established tradition in the French Court that age and wisdom went together. Youth pushed its way everywhere outside the royal Council-Chamber, which was closed against all except elderly Ministers. But the members of the rising generation had, in truth, little reason to complain. They were not fully cognisant of their own power. As individuals they were, indeed, kept outside the administration; but their influence as a class, for good or evil, was nothing short of omnipotent. The active force in French politics which alone mattered, and before which, in the last resort, the monarch and his advisers were compelled to bow, was the public opinion of the fashionable world; and, in June and July 1775, the current of that opinion ran with a vehemence and unanimity which carried all before it. Events were taking place at Boston and Philadelphia which usurped the attention, and touched the imagination, of everyone who had a thought to spare from his own selfish pleasures. The older men, whose animosity towards England had been embittered by two desperate wars, and by the sacrifices and ignominies of a dishonourable peace, caught eagerly at so unique a chance of inflicting a deadly wound on the pride and strength of the hereditary enemy. The younger men were all on fire to go crusading to America. Dependent on their parents for a fixed allowance, which seldom left them with cash in pocket, they contrasted their own position with the good fortune of Lafayette, who had come into his property early, and who was able to charter his own ship, and select his own

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires par M. Le Comte de Ségur*; Tome I., Page 27. Such, in its essence, was the life of the great English Whigs during the first half of the nineteenth century. "What enviable men you are!" said a French politician to the owners of Bowood and Castle Howard. "You dwell in palaces, and you lead the people."

companions in arms. They envied even such unlucky heroes as Pulaski and Kosciusko, who, after the ruin of their national cause at home, had shaken the dust of Poland from their feet, and gone across the western ocean to fight for the liberty of others. The tidings of Lexington reached the Baths of Spa at the precise period of midsummer when the great world had assembled to take the waters. That town was then "the coffee-house of Europe," to which French ladies and gentlemen resorted on a pretext of health, but in reality for the purpose of maintaining relations with those important people of other countries who, in the eighteenth century, combined to form one immense aristocracy of birth and fashion. When the fighting began at Boston it was a strange and novel spectacle to see "the representatives of every European kingdom united by a lively and friendly interest in subjects who had risen in revolt against a King."

Almost everyone, who was somebody, in Paris or at Versailles, had American sympathies; and nobody was at pains to conceal them. The new reign had relaxed the springs of despotic authority, had unpeopled the Bastille, and had set all tongues free to criticise and argue. The courtiers were not afraid of the King; and other members of the royal family were afraid of the courtiers, who seldom failed to impose their own view of politics upon those above them. The Comte d'Artois had been powerfully affected by the craze which was known as Anglomania. He is said to have evinced his respect and esteem for our nation by refusing to make bets with any except Englishmen; and that was no barren or valueless compliment, for he had sometimes lost as much as six thousand Louis d'or at a single race-meeting.<sup>1</sup> And yet, as soon as the frequenters of the *Œil de Bœul* began to take sides, — or, more properly speaking, to take one side, — in the American controversy, the Comte d'Artois, Prince of the Blood though he was, had no choice but to sink his English

<sup>1</sup> *London Evening Post* of February 1777.

proclivities, and declare himself a "Bostonian" with the rest. The young Queen had not been educated as a patroness of rebels. She was brought up by a mother who, of all sovereigns that ever lived, was perhaps the most persistent and conscientious in asserting of the doctrine that people should stay quietly where their rulers had placed them. Marie Antoinette's favourite brother, and the only person on earth of her own generation by whom she would submit to be lectured was the Emperor Joseph the Second; and Joseph regarded a monarch who encouraged disaffection in the British colonies as a traitor to his own caste. When an attempt was made to enlist his good-will on behalf of the American insurgents, he coldly replied that his vocation in life was to be an aristocrat. But the influence of her Austrian family over the Queen's mind was not strong enough to preserve her from the contagion of the new ideas. Her most intimate associates had always been women; and the warmest advocates of American liberty were to be found among a sex which never is half-hearted in partisanship. "Woman," (wrote a French historian under the Second Empire,) "in our sad day the prime agent of reaction, then showed herself young and ardent, and out-stripped the men in zeal for freedom."<sup>1</sup> Marie Antoinette obeyed the impulse which pervaded the society around her, and threw herself into the movement with frank and vivid enthusiasm. Long afterwards, when the poor lady had fallen upon very evil days, one of her determined political antagonists expressed himself as bound by justice and gratitude to acknowledge that "it was the Queen of France who gave the cause of America a fashion at the French Court."<sup>2</sup>

The warlike emotions which agitated the public mind exhaled themselves, as such emotions always do, in angry and contemptuous reflections on the apathy and timidity

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de France* par J. Michelet; Tome XIX., Chapitre 14.

<sup>2</sup> Paine's *Rights of Man*.



of the government. The French Ministers, however, were prepared to extract the utmost advantage from a situation which they understood very much better than any of the fine ladies and gentlemen who were inveighing against their excess of caution and their culpable indifference to the honour of the country. The responsible rulers of France had taken their measures silently, vigorously, adroitly, and most unscrupulously; and they had no objection whatever to being accused of backwardness, and even of pusillanimity, by foolish and noisy people outside the Cabinet. The war of aggression against England, which they had in contemplation, was so flagrantly unjustifiable, and so entirely unprovoked, that they were willing to present the appearance of having been driven into violent courses by an outburst of popular clamour and passion. The philosophical circles of Paris might be in a whirl of cosmopolitan excitement about the emancipation of a people from its tyrants, and the universal brotherhood of the human race; but the official advisers of Louis the Sixteenth descried in the American rebellion nothing except an opportunity for promoting the national interests of France, and for maiming and enfeebling the British Empire. That had been the central object of French statesmanship for three generations back; and the Prime Minister, the Comte de Maurepas, who had already passed his seventy-third birthday, was of an age which inclined him to pursue a continuous foreign policy. The old courtier saunters across the early pages of Carlyle's French Revolution under the guise of a frivolous votary of wit and pleasure; "his cloak well adjusted to the wind, if so be he may please all persons." That is the conventional portrait of Maurepas which posterity has accepted, in his own country and in ours. Nevertheless there was a more serious side to his character. Through the whole of a long life he never trimmed or trifled over any question connected with the efficiency of the French fleet and army; and he had been an early, and a persistent, naval reformer under rebuffs

and discouragements which would have daunted an insincere or a timid man. In 1776 the edge of his patriotism remained as keen as ever; but his power of work was impaired, and his bodily force abated. The burden of the crisis rested on the very capable shoulders of a younger colleague.<sup>1</sup>

The Comte de Vergennes had been French Ambassador at Constantinople when the Peace of Paris was signed. He felt the defeat of his country as men feel a grave personal misfortune. But his patriotic concern and mortification did not sink to the level of despair; for already, with rare sagacity, he detected a possible rift in the imposing fabric of the British Empire. He foresaw and foretold, from the very first moment, the consequences which would infallibly result from the cession of Canada. So long as the English colonists had France for their neighbour,—harassing them with raids, inciting the Indians to ravage their villages, and building forts and blockhouses up to the very edge of their frontier, and sometimes even within it,—they could not afford to dispense with the aid and protection of the mother-country. But the French power had been up-rooted from America. England, by her own act, had destroyed the only check which kept her Transatlantic subjects in awe; and if ever, from that time forward, she ill-treated or offended them, they would reply by throwing off their dependence. So Vergennes had specifically prophesied; and at the very moment when his prescience was justi-

<sup>1</sup> "Malgré son âge," (so Doniol says of Maurepas,) "il restait l'homme par qui avait été opérée autrefois la reconstitution de la Marine en vue de tenir tête à la Grande Bretagne, et de faire reprendre, un jour ou l'autre, à France sa part de l'empire des mers." The passage which follows this sentence contains a most interesting comparison between the actual, and the legendary, Maurepas.

"The ablest man I knew," wrote Horace Walpole, "was the old Comte de Maurepas. . . . Madame de Pompadour diverted a large sum that Maurepas had destined to re-establish their Marine. Knowing his enmity to this country, I told him, (and the compliment was true,) that it was fortunate for England that he had been so long divested of power." Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third*; Volume II., Chapter 2.

fied by the event, he found himself Foreign Minister of France, with the secret strings of diplomacy in his grasp; enjoying the unlimited confidence of his aged chief; and controlled by no one except a youthful king who was too obtuse to detect all that his Ministers were engaged in doing, and far too shy to rebuke them roundly for anything rash or unprincipled which they had actually done. Carlyle describes Vergennes as sitting at his desk "in dull matter of fact, like a dull punctual clerk;" but it is well for the tranquillity of Europe that such clerks do not often find their way to the top of the French Foreign Office. He was, in truth, a statesman with will and energy, who was always possessed by two absorbing ideas, the concurrent force of which impelled him towards his goal through a wilderness of obstacles, and over a mountain of almost superhuman labour. He could not feel at peace with himself until his country had recovered her rank among the nations of the world; and his policy was habitually inspired by intense and implacable hostility to England.

The French Ministers were strongly disposed to assist and protect the American insurgents; but they had a mortal terror of the British navy. They could not forget their experience of 1755, when they were taught, with no desire for a repetition of the lesson, that the mistress of the seas had a rough, and an over-prompt, way of dealing with an intruder on her own element. In the summer of that year, before ever war had been declared between the two nations, Boscawen attacked and scattered a French squadron of battle-ships, and Hawke brought into British ports three hundred French trading vessels, and lodged six thousand French sailors in British prisons.<sup>1</sup> And now, in the spring of 1776, the advisers of Louis the Sixteenth were haunted by an apprehension that, if France showed her hand prematurely, England,

<sup>1</sup> Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power*; Chapter 8.

and the English colonies, would hasten to make up their family quarrel, and would celebrate their reconciliation by joining together in an attack upon the French possessions in the West Indies. King Louis was solemnly and repeatedly warned by his diplomatic agents in London that Lord Chatham, the idol of his compatriots on both sides of the Atlantic, would mediate between the Crown and Congress, and would be recalled to power as Prime Minister. He would have at his disposal,—equipped for a campaign, inured to battle, and assembled at a convenient spot for embarkation,—the Boston garrison of ten thousand British regulars, and a host of New England minute-men and Virginian sharp-shooters; while sixty vessels of the Royal Navy, and a swarm of colonial privateers, were afloat on American waters, ready and eager to bombard French ports, and to make prizes of French merchantmen. Long before any reinforcements could arrive from Brest or Rochefort, the famous English war minister would sweep the French from Saint Domingo, and Martinique, and Guadeloupe, and all the rest of the Greater and Lesser Antilles, just as, half a generation previously, he had swept them out of Canada.<sup>1</sup>

That prospect, formidable as it looked, did not deter Vergennes from the purpose upon which his mind was set; but he thought it prudent, for the time being, to mask his operations by an artful system of underhand manœuvres. Disguising a flagrant breach of international good faith under the specious name of patriotic caution, he drew up a paper of Considerations on the Policy which should be pursued by the Governments of France and Spain; and, on the twelfth of March 1776, he communicated the document to King Louis, and to his own four principal colleagues in the Cabinet. It was essential, (he wrote,) to persuade George the Third that the intentions of the two Bourbon Powers towards England were not only pacific,

<sup>1</sup> Doniol; Volume I., Page 69, and elsewhere.

but positively friendly, in order that the English ministry might be emboldened to entangle themselves, too deep for retreat, in a fierce, a dubious, and a most exhausting war against their own colonists. The courage of those colonists, on the other hand, would have to be "sustained by secret favours" from France. They should be supplied furtively, but generously, with arms and money, and informed that, while it was below the dignity of the French King to treat openly with insurgents, His Majesty was disposed to recognise them as allies if they ventured upon the decisive step of renouncing their allegiance to the English Crown, and declaring themselves an independent nation.<sup>1</sup>

The Chief of the Cabinet, the Minister of War, and the Minister of the Marine warmly approved the objects that Vergennes had in view, and expressed no repugnance to the means by which he purposed to attain them. But every paragraph in the Foreign Secretary's memorandum was intensely distasteful to the King. Louis the Sixteenth had little inclination to pose as the tutelary genius of a rebellion. "His intuitions, dim as they were," forewarned him that revolutionary principles were among the most portable of all foreign products, and that no ocean was broad enough to preserve European monarchies from being infected by the contagion of American republicanism.<sup>2</sup> Nor could he fail to remember how, a very short while back, and by his own express command, the Comte de Vergennes had emphatically re-assured Viscount Stormont, the English Ambassador in France, as to the intentions and the sympathies of the French Court.<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister himself, at a subsequent

<sup>1</sup> Doniol; Volume I., Pages 272-286.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft's *History of the United States of America*; Epoch Fourth, Chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Stormont to Lord Rochford; Fontainebleau, October 31, 1775. Vergennes, "spontaneously, and with the air and manner of a man who utters his honest opinion," informed Lord Stormont that the American rebellion was regarded at Versailles as a calamity; and that, far from desiring to increase the embarrassments of the British Government, the



interview with Lord Stormont, spoke still more unequivocally to the same effect. "I and my colleagues," said Maurepas, "are not the men to take advantage of a neighbour's difficulties, and to fish in troubled waters. You may accept it for certain that we are not giving, and will never give, any single article of warlike stores for the use of the rebel army."<sup>1</sup> Louis the Sixteenth, who was acquainted with all that had passed between his own confidential servants and King George's diplomatic representative, recoiled, like a true gentleman, from the notion of striking a foul blow against a brother monarch with whom he professed to be on terms of cordial amity. He was governed, moreover, by a conviction of duty, as well as by a sense of honour. Although of languid will, and inert habits, he none the less was instinctively public-spirited; and by the sincerity of his religious belief, and the rectitude of his personal conduct, he merited his conventional appellation of The Most Christian King. Conscience forbade him to enter upon a course of treachery which could not fail to involve his country in a hazardous and protracted war. Actuated by an unfeigned solicitude for the people committed to his charge, he shrank from wantonly inaugurating, after an interval of only twelve years, another devil's carnival of bloodshed and rapine, of national peril, and of private bereavement, impoverishment, and ruin.

Louis the Sixteenth had good reason to trust his unfavourable judgment of the proposals submitted to him by Vergennes; for his own scruples were shared by as wise and virtuous a minister as ever took part in the councils of any State, whether kingdom or republic, in the modern or the ancient world. Michelet,—the most audacious of historians, who has handled only too freely topics which he would

King of France and his Ministers contemplated those embarrassments with extreme regret.

<sup>1</sup> Doniol; Volume I., Pages 198-202.

have done much better to leave alone, — relates how, in the darkness of the night, an inner voice addressed to him the warning words: "What man of this generation is worthy to speak of Turgot?"<sup>1</sup> Every author, and not Michelet only, may well feel that it is superfluous, and almost impertinent, to praise a statesman the bare mention of whose name is in itself a sufficient panegyric. By March 1776, Turgot had for nineteen months been Comptroller of Finances, and, (in far other than the official sense of the term,) a keeper of the King's conscience. He had still five years of life before him; and within that time, working at the rate at which he hitherto had worked, he might have brought to completion the vast, but practicable, scheme of public economy, extinction of privilege, unfettered commerce, local self-government, and national education by which he confidently hoped to re-organise the body politic, and to renovate society. If Turgot had not been robbed of his royal master's confidence by the intrigues of those courtiers and nobles whom he was endeavouring to save in spite of themselves, his country would have been guided, along quieter paths, to much happier destinies than those which awaited her under Robespierre, and Barras, and Napoleon Bonaparte. France might have escaped untold horrors; and Europe might have been spared an almost interminable series of useless and devastating wars.

Turgot had been a warm, and a very early, friend to the independence of America; which he welcomed in the interests of mankind, and not least for the sake of England.<sup>2</sup> But his first duty was to his own country; and he combated the proposal of a warlike policy with an earnestness inspired by his profound conviction that the whole future of France was involved in the decision which her rulers were now called upon to take. His reply to Vergennes cost him some weeks of thought

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de France*; Volume XIX., Chapter 13.

<sup>2</sup> Turgot to Doctor Josiah Tucker, the Dean of Gloucester; Paris, September 12, 1770.

and labour. It was a masterly production; a voluminous treatise, three quarters of a century in advance of his age, on the philosophy of colonial administration, and at the same time a powerful and persuasive official minute upon the question of the hour. England, (so the argument ran,) would in all likelihood lose her colonies; or, if she succeeded in reconquering them, she would be condemned thenceforward to hold them in subjection at an expense of money, and military resources, which would bind her over, under the most stringent penalties, to keep the peace with her European neighbours and rivals, and more especially with France.<sup>1</sup> Whatever result might ensue, France would be the gainer; and to choose such a moment for a wanton and gratuitous attack upon England was an immeasurable folly, and a signal crime. The English ministry had done nothing whatever to invite or provoke a war; and every plan of aggression on the part of France was forbidden by moral reasons, and by considerations of national self-interest more imperious still. The King, (said the Comptroller-General,) was acquainted with the condition of his finances, and knew, better than anyone, what sacrifices and efforts were required to stave off bankruptcy even in time of peace. The first cannon-shot fired against a foreign enemy would scatter to the winds all His Majesty's gracious designs for the better government of France, and for the amelioration in the hard lot of her unhappy peasantry. "An English war," (such was Turgot's conclusion,) "should be shunned as the greatest of all misfortunes; since it would render impossible, perhaps for ever, a reform absolutely necessary to the prosperity of the State and the solace of the people."<sup>2</sup>

Turgot did well to spare no pains over the composi-

<sup>1</sup> "Que nous faisait, dès lors, que l'Angleterre soumit ou non ses colonies insurgentes? Soumises, elles l'occuperaient assez par leur désir de devenir libres, pour que nous n'ayons plus à craindre. Affranchies, tout le système commercial se trouvait changé."

<sup>2</sup> Doniol; Volume I., Pages 280-283. *The Life and Writings of Turgot*, edited by W. Walter Stephens; pages 295-296, and 321-324.

tion of this historical document, for it was the last important State-paper which he wrote from his official chair. He had made a host of enemies by his bold and uncompromising action in almost every department of public affairs; and yet he was feared and hated, less for what he had done already, than for what he might do next. It was bad enough that the tiller of the soil should be released from the obligation of maintaining roads and highways by his unpaid labour; that the town artisan, emancipated from the shackles of trade monopoly, should be at liberty to carry his skill and industry into the open market; that corn grown in one province should be sold, and exported, with the effect of lowering the price of bread in another; and that tribute should no longer be exacted from government contractors, and Farmers General, by great people about the Court. All this was bad enough, but there was worse behind; for it was a matter of notoriety that "le sieur Turgot," with the innate vulgarity of his birth and breeding, was not alive to the merits of a fiscal system under which the poor and the industrious were bled to the quick, while the rich and the idle "contributed a mere fraction of their substance to the revenue of the State, and then divided among themselves the larger part of its expenditure." Unless a change came over the spirit of the Treasury, the tax-gatherer would soon be knocking, with equal hand, at the castle and the cottage; and salaries and pensions would have to be earned by hard dull work in the service of the nation, instead of being distributed among the sons and daughters of leisure, as the reward of sycophancy and importunity.

The case was urgent; and the manipulators of politics had recourse to the machinery by which Ministerial arrangements had been effected during the late reign, with one very important modification. Female influence was again called into play; but it was the influence of the wife, and not of the mistress. There was an outburst of sinister activity in the closely-banded circle of

high-born men and women by whom Marie Antoinette was encompassed, and plundered, and prompted. Turgot was not blind to the perils of his situation. When he first went to the Treasury he had addressed his royal master in plain and honest words. "I shall have," he said, "to struggle even against the goodness and generosity of Your Majesty, and of the persons who are most dear to you." He kept his promise; and the Queen, before very long, became his personal adversary. Her only idea with regard to public money was to get as much as possible of it to spend. However often her lap was filled with gold, and her toilet-case with jewels, she still had unpaid bills which she dared not show to her husband because she knew her husband dared not show them to his Comptroller General.<sup>1</sup> There was one grudge rankling in her memory which surpassed all the others. In an evil hour for herself, and for the object of her misplaced bounty, she had done her utmost, without success, to procure the enormous salary of fifty thousand crowns a year for her favourite, the Princesse de Lamballe; the same ill-fated lady who, in September 1792, heard economic reformers, of a very much fiercer type than Turgot, thundering at the door of her prison. The Austrian ambassador at Versailles, the Comte de Mercy, had been entrusted with the duty of keeping his Empress punctually and faithfully informed as to her daughter's conduct; and the young Queen was exhorted, both by her mother and brother, to abstain from interference in French politics. But her monitors were far away, and her tempters near at hand. Seldom indeed, in all the history of the past, was greater mischief wrought by woman than when Marie Antoinette placed herself at the service of that base and selfish conspiracy for the murder of a noble career, and the destruction of a nation's hopes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Monsieur de Mercy to the Empress of Austria; July 19, 1776.

<sup>2</sup> Marie Antoinette confessed to her mother that she was not ill pleased by the changes in the ministry, although she herself had not



The threatened minister became conscious that the ground was undermined beneath his feet. He stood deserted and alone in the face of danger. Even President Malesherbes, the only colleague with whom he was on terms of sympathy and confidence, resigned office unexpectedly, and, (as regards Turgot,) somewhat shabbily and disloyally. Sixteen years afterwards Malesherbes, with a prospect of the guillotine as his advocate's fee, valiantly defended his fallen sovereign at the bar of the Convention; a conspicuous example that there have been those who find it less terrible to confront death than to defy social unpopularity. Malesherbes retired on the twelfth of May 1776; and, on the same evening, Turgot received a message to the purport that he was no longer Comptroller General. There was joy in the corridors of Versailles; and dowagers, who thought that they wrote like Madame de Sévigné, filled their letters with epigrams upon the fallen minister. But the millions, who toiled and suffered, knew that they had lost their best friend, and their only protector; and all sincere well-wishers to France were overwhelmed by grief, consternation, and a sentiment akin to despair. Condorcet sent Voltaire a melancholy and touching letter, ending with the words: "Adieu! We have had a beautiful dream." "Ever since Turgot is out of place," (Voltaire himself wrote,) "I see only death before me. I cannot conceive how he could be dismissed. A thunderbolt has fallen on my head and on my heart." The announcement of the great Minister's removal from power was everywhere recognised as the death-knell of European peace. "Such men as Turgot," (said Horace Walpole,) "who are the friends of human kind, could not think of war, however fair the opportunity we offered to them. Poor France and poor England!" After the deed was done, King Louis was overcome with shame, and very sad and

meddled in the matter. De Mercy told Maria Theresa a very different story. It was, (he wrote,) the Queen's full intention to have the Comptroller General turned out from office, and sent straight to the Bastille.

anxious. "Except myself and Turgot," (so he had been used to say,) "there is no one who really loves the people." Sensible of his own weakness, he foresaw that he would soon be coerced into undoing all the good work which he and his departed servant had accomplished together. And, now that he stood alone against the opinion of his united Cabinet, he felt himself powerless to avert the projected war with England which shocked his conscience, and which in its consequences proved fatal to his reign.

## CHAPTER XI

BEAUMARCHAIS. FREDERIC OF PRUSSIA. FRANKLIN IN  
PARIS. THE FRENCH TREATIES

WHEN Turgot fell from power, Vergennes became undisputed master of the international situation; and he had at his disposal, for carrying out his purposes, an instrument as sharp as ever political craftsman handled. He was in intimate and secret relations with a man who may fairly be described as having led the typical French career of the eighteenth century. Pierre Augustin Caron, born in the Rue Saint-Denis at Paris in the year 1732, was the son of an ex-Calvinist watchmaker who enjoyed the patronage of the Court at Versailles. The younger Caron might often be seen at the Palace on his father's errands. He was greatly noticed for his handsome face and manly bearing, his assured air and dominant manners, and the instinctive impression which he produced on all who met him that, against whatever difficulties and by whatever methods, he intended to carry the world before him. His merits were not lost on the great ladies of the Court; but he had the good sense to try his wings in a low flight, and, by the age of three-and-twenty, he was on the best of terms with the wife of one of the sixteen Clerks of Office of the King's Household, who, as a matter of fact, and in plain words, were the waiters at the royal dinner-table. The husband, already advanced in years, made over his employment to his young friend, and died a few months afterwards. Caron had now a salary of two thousand francs, and enjoyed the privilege of wearing a sword when he brought in the dishes. He married the widow; and from that time forward he signed himself Caron de Beaumarchais, after a small

feudal estate which was said to be in the possession of his wife's family. The exact locality of that estate has never been ascertained; but the name was soon famous throughout Europe.

Beaumarchais climbed fast when once his foot was on the ladder. He had the inestimable gift of persuading others to serve him without requiring in return anything except his gratitude. His first wife died within the year, and in due time he married another rich and handsome widow. He had not attained the social rank which qualified for admission among the friends, and personal clients, of Madame de Pompadour; but he contrived to make acquaintance with the gentleman who had been her husband, and he struck up a very close alliance with her confidential man of business. This was Monsieur Du Verney, the eminent capitalist who put Voltaire in the way of obtaining that army-contract which made him the Cræsus of literature, and who was an equally generous patron to Beaumarchais. Du Verney endowed the young fellow with a large sum of money; he indoctrinated him in the secrets of Court finance; and he provided him with funds whenever a lucrative office was for sale which was beyond the compass of his private resources. Beaumarchais was thus enabled to become Secretary to the King, Lieutenant-General of the Parks and Chases, and Captain of the Warren of the Louvre. He laid down half a million francs, at a single payment, in order to buy a place among the Grand Masters of the Lakes and Forests; but on this occasion he had aimed too high, and the other members of the Board refused to be associated with the son of a watchmaker. Beaumarchais declined to intrude where he was not welcome, and avenged himself on his fastidious opponents by a delicious specimen of his sarcastic humour.<sup>1</sup> He was an admi-

<sup>1</sup> Beaumarchais, the most perfect of sons and brothers, never wrote better than when he was rebuking those who jeered at his family, or attacked his private life. "I own," he said on one occasion, "that nothing can wash away the reproach of having been the son of a watchmaker. I can only reply that I never saw the man with whom I would

rable writer. His prose was always clear and pointed, sometimes remarkably forcible, and often exquisitely graceful; and his verse, which flowed profusely, satisfied the taste of the day. His celebrity owes a very large debt to the genius of others; for his name has been perpetuated by Rossini and Mozart in the two most popular operas, of their own class, that ever were exhibited on the stage. Beaumarchais himself was no mean musician. He sang with taste; and played to perfection on the flute, and on the harp, which then was a novelty in Paris. He was a principal performer in the weekly concert given at Versailles in the apartment of those four daughters of Louis the Fifteenth who bore the august title of Mesdames de France.

Beaumarchais breathed freely and easily in the corrupt element by which he was surrounded; but he had in him the making of a greater man if he had lived in greater times. He was something very different from a supple courtier. The Dauphin, who was an abler prince than his unfortunate son, and far more virtuous than his father, said that Beaumarchais was the only person, in and about Versailles, from whom he could learn the truth; and the two famous comedies, the Barber of Seville and the Marriage of Figaro, which were produced at a time when their author was still laboriously mounting the path of advancement, abounded in sharp strokes against the follies of those great folks who had the power to make, or unmake, his fortunes. Beaumarchais, the most brilliant of upstarts, never ceased to be a mark for envy, and for what would

exchange fathers; and I know too well the value of that time which, in the exercise of our trade, he taught me to measure, to waste any of it in taking notice of such despicable trivialities."

An adversary of Beaumarchais endeavoured to sap his credit with the Comte de Vergennes by accusing him of "keeping girls." Beaumarchais favoured his calumniator with a letter, of which he sent a copy to the Foreign Secretary. "Monsieur," (he wrote,) "the girls whom I have kept for the last twenty years are five in number; my four sisters and my niece. Two of them, to my great sorrow, have lately died; but I likewise support that unhappy father who is unfortunate enough to have given to the world so shameless a libertine as myself."



willingly have been contempt; but no one then lived with whom it was less safe to trifle. The wounds inflicted by his pen took long to heal; and he possessed the courage of the swordsman as well as of the satirist. He had killed his man in a terrible duel; and, while his reply to an insolent letter was invariably couched in phrases of subtle and refined wit that set all the world laughing, he was pretty sure to conclude with a very significant hint that he was ready to make good his words by push of steel. He was admired and dreaded as the most dexterous and persistent of intellectual gladiators. Never was there such an example made of any offender as Beaumarchais made of Monsieur Goëzman, the Judge who gave a decision unfavourable to his claims, after the Judge's wife had accepted from him a purse of gold. The guilty pair were ruined; and the disappointed suitor emerged from his single-handed conflict against the paramount, and unscrupulously exerted, authority of the Parliament of Paris with the reputation of having approved himself the most irrepressible controversialist in France.<sup>1</sup>

Beaumarchais was now regarded in the highest quarters as too clever to be wasted, and much too formidable to be left unemployed. Shortly before the death of Louis the Fifteenth he was sent to England, under a feigned name, as a private agent of the French Cabinet. Information had arrived from London that, somewhere in the very lowest and dingiest regions of literature, preparations were on foot for issuing a book which purported to be the secret memoirs of Madame du Barry. Beaumarchais settled the business at a cost in money which greatly exceeded the value of that lady's reputation. He secured and destroyed the manuscript; and three thousand copies of the work

<sup>1</sup> Everything known about Beaumarchais has been told, and well told, in the admirable work entitled *Beaumarchais, et Son Temps, par Louis de Loménie, de l'Académie Française*; Paris, 1855. De Loménie ends his last volume with a very just, and interesting, disquisition on the political eminence, which Beaumarchais might have reached if he had been born in the days of free and constitutional government.

were burned in a lime-kiln under his personal supervision. He next bought up, for a still larger price, a mischievous libel upon Marie Antoinette; and his successful conduct of these two negotiations led to his being entrusted with a still more singular commission. He was directed to seek out the Chevalier d'Éon, who then resided in England, and order him in the name of King Louis to dress himself in petticoats, and make a public declaration that he was a woman, which he most certainly was not. The work in which Beaumarchais was engaged during his visit to our island cannot be described as dignified or important; but he found time to spare for matters more worthy of his attention, and not less suited to his very peculiar abilities. He had a lively interest in British politics, which at that time were almost exclusively concerned with the question of America. He rubbed shoulders with men of all parties, and he heard both sides. Lord Rochford, the most approachable among Secretaries of State, made him the companion of his all too numerous lighter hours; and he was a sworn brother to John Wilkes, who resembled Beaumarchais as nearly as an Englishman can resemble a Frenchman, in the defects and qualities of his character, and not less in the most remarkable circumstance of his past career. There was not much to choose, whether for praise or blame, between the champion of the Goëzman law-suit, and the hero of the Middlesex election. As soon as the rebellion broke out, Beaumarchais foresaw that the colonists would win; and he entertained a deep and passionate belief that, if France helped them in their hour of need, she would obtain her share in the advantages of their victory. He threw himself into the movement with an energy so masterful that he imposed his views upon the leading members of a Cabinet, which he served in a humble, and even an ignominious, capacity. There is no more instructive instance of the stupendous results which may be accomplished by native force of will, and acute perception of the right moment for vigorous action, than the story of the adventurer who, with no

recognised official position, and three aliases to his name, never hesitated or rested until he had set France and England by the ears.

The potent influence exercised by Beaumarchais over the decisions of the French Government is a strange phenomenon, but not altogether inexplicable to those who have been behind the scenes in politics. A private individual, with a message of his own to deliver, finds it very difficult to get a hearing in official quarters. But, if once he has been accepted as an adviser, he has every chance of making his opinion felt; for he speaks with a freedom of conviction, and novelty of phrase, refreshing to overworked statesmen depressed and dulled by the sense of responsibility, who are tired of discussing an affair of State among themselves, and who know each other's arguments by heart. Beaumarchais twice addressed the Royal Council at Versailles in a strain of fiery and picturesque eloquence which no Cabinet Minister, that ever lived, would venture to inflict upon his own colleagues. His line of reasoning was artfully adapted to the pacific temperament of Louis the Sixteenth, and to his unambitious aspirations for the welfare and tranquillity of his people. The American rebellion, (so Beaumarchais wrote,) must terminate, if left to itself, in a complete victory for England, or for the revolted colonies; and in either of those contingencies France would inevitably, and almost immediately, find herself plunged into a sanguinary, and frightfully expensive, war. The only possible means of averting such a catastrophe was to maintain an equilibrium between the two contending parties by surreptitiously helping the insurgents, during the first stage of the conflict, with arms and ammunition. That transaction should be so conducted as not to compromise the French Government; and, if His Majesty required the services of a devoted agent, Beaumarchais himself was prepared to accept the office, and to compensate for lack of ability by zeal, fidelity, and discretion. "Believe me, Sire," (he said,) "when I assure you that the mere preparations

for a first campaign would be more onerous to your Treasury than the whole amount of those modest succours for which Congress now petitions; and that the paltry and melancholy saving of a couple of million francs at the present moment will cost you three hundred millions before two years are over.”<sup>1</sup> In his private correspondence with the ministers, Beaumarchais was much less respectful to his Sovereign; and he did not scruple to say plainly that, in small things and in great, Louis the Sixteenth never had, and never would have, a mind of his own. He recalled to Maurepas how that amiable and docile Prince had sworn that he would not allow himself to be inoculated; and how, a week after the oath was taken, he had the germ of the small-pox in his arm. “Everyone,” said Beaumarchais, “knows how the case stands between the King and yourself; and no one will excuse you, if you cannot persuade His Majesty to adopt those high designs on which your own soul is intent.”<sup>2</sup>

Such letters, in any previous reign, might have lodged the writer in the Bastille, and consigned the minister to disgrace and exile; but Maurepas and Vergennes stood in no awe whatever of Louis the Sixteenth, and they were impressed and fascinated by Beaumarchais. He had proposed himself as an intermediary between Philadelphia and Versailles; and he was promptly taken at his word. In June 1776 the Foreign Secretary handed him an order on the French Treasury for a million francs; and, two months afterwards, another million was transmitted to him by the Court of Madrid. From Spain he also borrowed a title for the fictitious house of business under cover of which he traded; and purchases were made, and ships chartered, on behalf, not of Caron de Beaumarchais,

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire remis au Roi cacheté, par M. de Sartines le 21 Septembre, 1775. Mémoire remis à M. le Comte de Vergennes, cachet volant, le 29 Février, 1776.*

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoire de Beaumarchais, remis au Comte de Maurepas le 30 Mars, 1777.*

but of Roderigo Hortalez and Company. It was a favoured firm, whose buyers found means to procure surplus military stores in great quantity, and excellent condition, from the public arsenals of France; together with a large number of cannons and mortars cast in the royal gun-factories, on which, by a convenient oversight, the authorities had omitted to stamp the royal arms.<sup>1</sup> The custom-house people, and the officers of the port, at Havre and Nantes had at first been troublesome and inquisitive; but in January 1777, after the arrival of a government courier from Paris, they stopped asking questions about any vessels, bound for an unknown destination, which had been taking suspicious cargoes on board. Half a score of merchantmen, ostensibly belonging to Hortalez and Company, were presently on their way to America; and, in the course of the next few weeks, three ship-loads of muskets and gunpowder, together with clothing and footgear for five-and-twenty thousand soldiers, were landed at Portsmouth in New Hampshire "amidst acclamations, and clapping of hands, from an immense multitude of spectators." Only a very short time had elapsed since the Comte de Vergennes, in the name of his monarch, had congratulated the English ambassador on the capture of Rhode Island by the English navy; and the Foreign Secretary had thought fit to add, on his own account, that he had heard the good news with an emotion of "true sensibility."<sup>2</sup> They little knew our country who imagined that she could be tricked and flouted with impunity. It was a matter of absolute certainty that now, as at other periods of her history, she would encounter secret treachery by open resort to arms. That million of francs, by the judicious and timely disbursement of which the French Ministry had hoped

<sup>1</sup> This circumstance is stated in a conversation between the Duke of Grafton and Lord Weymouth, reported in the ninth chapter of the *Autobiography and Political Correspondence of the Duke of Grafton*, Edited by Sir William Anson.

<sup>2</sup> Doniol; Tome II., Chapitre 6.



to inflict a mortal injury on the British power with small cost and danger to themselves, had grown, before the affair was finally settled, into a war expenditure of something very near a milliard and a quarter; and the royal government of France, which had stooped to such unroyal practices, was submerged in an ocean of bankruptcy where it was destined miserably to perish. That was what came of an attempt to fight England on the cheap.<sup>1</sup>

The ablest monarch on the Continent of Europe was an unsparing critic of the British policy, and a personal enemy of the British sovereign; but he was wise enough, and old enough, to regulate his animosity by a prudent and rather selfish caution. Frederic of Prussia had already reached his grand climacteric. He was prematurely aged in looks and in health; a broken man, if the body could have subdued the soul. But there was tempered steel within that frayed and battered sheath; and his spirit was unquenched, his will firm, and his wit keen and biting. In October 1775 he had been prostrated by the most severe illness from which he ever rose alive. The British ambassador at Berlin reported him to his Court as dying; and the French accounts exaggerated his physical weakness, (to use Frederic's own martial metaphor,) as much as they always were accustomed to exaggerate the English losses in a pitched battle. He was very ill; but he never wasted an opportunity; and, during the hours when the doctors would not allow him to work, he lay quiet, and thought the American question out.<sup>2</sup> The illustrious invalid, on his sick-bed, understood George the Third's affairs much better than they were understood by George the Third himself when in full posses-

<sup>1</sup> It was calculated that, between the years 1778 and 1783, the war with England cost the French Treasury forty-eight million pounds sterling. It was the main cause of those financial difficulties which led immediately up to the Revolution of 1789.

<sup>2</sup> Le roi Frédéric au Comte de Maltzan, Octobre 1775.

sion of his health; and some of the reflections which presented themselves to Frederic's mind were eminently just, and far from ill-natured or ignoble. He had known and admired England at a period when she was true to her better self, and while she still obeyed the guidance of her best man. She had been the only ally who, in the old hero's immense and varied experience, had ever given him more help than trouble; and Lord Chatham was the one human being on earth whom, in his heart, he acknowledged as his peer. Frederic would gladly have seen our nation intelligently and strongly governed; taking an active part in European politics; and remaining faithful, at home and abroad, to those principles of liberty which, (however little he might desire to see them introduced into his own kingdom,) he regarded as the main source of England's strength, and as the common heritage of her sons in every quarter of the globe. He thought it "very hard," (such were his exact words,) that Parliament should have proclaimed the colonists as rebels for defending their privileges against the encroachments of the central government. "Every Englishman," he said, "who is a friend to his own country, must deplore the turn that affairs are taking, and the odious perspective of discord and calamity which has opened in the history of his race."

That sentiment was finely expressed, and honourable to Frederic's head and heart; but his hostility to the Court of St. James's was inflamed by prejudices and resentments less worthy of so great a ruler. In his personal dislikes he was only too little of a hypocrite; and his opinion of contemporary monarchs, and their favourites of both sexes, had always been the one and only State secret which he was incapable of keeping unrevealed. Everything in Prussia was strictly governed except his own tongue and pen; and he would have avoided many serious difficulties if to the military genius of a Gustavus Adolphus, and the administrative faculty of a Peter the Great, he had added the charac-

teristic attribute of William the Silent. There were two men, and one woman, by whom Frederic esteemed himself to have been deeply injured, and whom he never even pretended to forgive. The woman, who was Madame de Pompadour, had by this time died; but the other objects of his wrath were still within the reach of his ill offices, and the range of his satire. It had been a bad moment for the King of Prussia when, at the crisis of the Seven Years' War, the military and financial assistance extended to him by George the Second, and William Pitt, was unexpectedly withdrawn by George the Second's successor, and his new Scotch Prime Minister. Half a generation had elapsed since that distressing event occurred; but Frederic even yet could never mention George the Third and Lord Bute with patience, and very seldom with decency. A scalded cat, (he would say,) dreaded even the cold water; and he, for his part, was incapable of being friends with a prince who had treated him with such signal duplicity. On one occasion, indeed, he went so far as to tell his ambassador in London that he would as soon be an ally of King George as a good Christian would be on terms with the Devil; and he was fond of declaring that Lord Bute would certainly be hanged for throwing away the American colonies, and that he himself would be only too delighted to provide the rope.<sup>1</sup>

Although Frederic the Great seldom denied himself the indulgence of giving free play to his malicious humour, he had not become the most famous, and the most successful, of European potentates by basing his foreign policy on his private antipathies and predilections. He hated King George, and he despised King George's ministers; but, during every successive phase of the American dispute, his course was exclusively determined by the conception which he had formed of Prussian interests, and by no other consideration of

<sup>1</sup> Le roi Frédéric au Comte de Maltzan, 3 Janvier 1774; 9 Janvier 1775; 10 Octobre 1776; 7 Avril 1777.

any sort or kind whatsoever. He had long ago been satiated with campaigns and battles. In his ambitious youth, before he had been a twelvemonth on the throne, he had cut out for himself a task which lasted him his life-time; and now, at the age of sixty-three, he had no mind to re-commence his Herculean toils, and expose his people, whom he sincerely loved, to the sacrifices of war and the miseries of invasion. But for some while past he had foreseen, with stern reluctance, the approach of a political contingency which would force him once again to draw the sword. The Elector of Bavaria, who was in precarious health, might die at any moment, leaving behind him no issue, and a disputed succession. His Duchy was claimed by the Emperor of Germany, on the most flimsy and antiquated of pretexts; and Joseph the Second made no secret of his intention to march across the Inn river, and take forcible possession of Munich, and the adjacent district, as soon as the breath was out of the Elector's body. So great an increase of territory would render the House of Austria nothing less than despotic within the boundaries of the Empire; and Frederic was firmly resolved to stand forward in the character of the champion of German independence.

As Generalissimo of the levies of the Confederacy, with his own splendid army to set them an example of valour and discipline, the King of Prussia was a match for any force which Austria herself could place in the field; but it would be a far more serious business if the Emperor Joseph could persuade Marie Antoinette to cajole her husband into embarking upon an offensive, and defensive, alliance with the Court of Vienna. The young Queen of France was deeply attached to her brother, and followed his advice on all points where she recognised his title to interfere with her opinions and her conduct. If it was a question of enriching a favourite, or of spending too much money on her milliner and her landscape-gardener, she was in the habit of treating his admonitions with silent neglect; but she obeyed him

loyally and eagerly with regard to any matter that excited the ambition, and promoted the aggrandisement, of the family from which she sprang. The instinct of the Parisians had already condemned her, not unjustly, as a good Austrian and a very indifferent Frenchwoman; and the knowledge that she was devoted to the interests of his own life-long adversary gave deep concern, and unsleeping anxiety, to the ruler of Prussia. That doughty soldier was nervously alive to the danger of female influence in high places. When Turgot fell, and when the authority of the first administrator of his generation withered before the breath of a woman's displeasure, Frederic expressed his dread lest France should thenceforward "pass under a Government of the distaff;"<sup>1</sup> and the veteran warrior had cruel reason to regard the distaff as the most formidable of weapons. What with two empresses, and a King's mistress, — three women, (so he used to say,) hanging at his throat for seven years together, — he had come so near to being throttled that he had no inclination to repeat the horrible experience. He held it as a matter of life and death that, for several years to come, the attention of France should be diverted from Prussia, and that her energies and resources should be consumed in another, and a distant, quarter. If the Cabinets of Versailles and London could be embroiled over the question of America, Louis the Sixteenth would have no men or money to spare; and Joseph the Second would be reduced to fight single-handed in the German war which now was imminent. The King of France might be the most uxorious of husbands; but no sane or rational French statesmen would aspire to have Frederic the Great for an enemy on land, at a time when they were contending at sea against the power of England.

The King of Prussia, who was no vulgar soldier, knew that a long period of stable peace was a prime necessity for France, exhausted, as she was, by a series of calamitous wars; and he had sincerely applauded

<sup>1</sup> Le roi Frédéric à M. de Goltz; Potsdam, 25 Avril 1776.



Turgot as a wise and merciful man, who made it his object to relieve a wretched peasantry from the fiscal burdens under which they groaned.<sup>1</sup> But Frederic was not in a position to afford himself the luxury of yielding to an impulse of philanthropy. During five-and-thirty years of peril and difficulty he had lived in single-minded obedience to the law of self-preservation; and, when he arrived at the conclusion that a quarrel between France and England would conduce to the security of his own kingdom, he put aside all thoughts of compassion for the French tax-payer. From the beginning of 1778 onwards he employed his immense cleverness, and his unequalled authority, to impress upon Louis the Sixteenth's ministers a conviction that the revolt of the American colonies was an opportunity for reducing the power of Great Britain which had never occurred before, and could not be expected to present itself again in the course of three generations.<sup>2</sup> That was the text upon which his ambassador at Versailles was ceaselessly exhorted to ring the changes. The poor man could never preach often enough, or loud enough, to satisfy his exacting master. Every week,—and, as the plot thickened, every third day,—brought from Potsdam a hotly worded reminder that King Louis, and his advisers, were letting the favourable moment slip. The pusillanimity of the Cabinet at Versailles, (so Frederic declared,) would be an eternal monument of weakness and indecision, and would prove that French public men lacked either the nerve, or the ambition, to revive the commanding part which their Court had formerly played on the theatre of Europe. When the unhappy Prussian envoy sought to excuse himself from acting as the mouthpiece for a diplomatic message couched in such very unflattering terms, he

<sup>1</sup> Le roi Frédéric à M. de Goltz, 1 Juillet 1776; à Monsieur d'Alembert, Octobre 1774.

<sup>2</sup> These words are taken from a letter written by Frederic in September 1777.

was told that his explanation was a parcel of verbiage, not worth the travelling expenses of a courier. Instead of pestering his Sovereign with page after page of diffuse and senseless rubbish, — the sort of stuff that a parrot might write if it could use a pen, — let him go straight off to the Comte de Vergennes, and say that the King of Prussia, after reading the last news from America, was willing to stake his military reputation on a prediction that, unless France speedily interfered, the colonists would be beaten; and that England, as soon as the rebellion was crushed, without troubling herself to issue a formal declaration of war, would descend in overpowering force upon the French garrisons in the West Indies.<sup>1</sup>

Frederic's neighbourly interest in their national affairs was accepted by the French as a compliment. They set a high value on the advice voluntarily and gratuitously offered them by so consummate a master of war and foreign policy; although they could not but perceive that he consistently abstained from enforcing his precepts by the smallest particle of practice. An old German Baron in Philadelphia had been accustomed to amuse his young Whig friends by assuring them, in quaint English, that the King of Prussia was "a great man for Liberty;"<sup>2</sup> but never was a sentiment more strictly platonic than Frederic's affection for the cause of American freedom. He maintained a passive attitude throughout the war; he civilly, but very plainly, forbade Congress to use his port of Embden as a base for their naval operations; and it was not until the rebellion had finally triumphed, and the world was once more at peace, that he followed the lead of Great Britain herself, and, long after the twelfth hour had struck, recognised the United States as an independent

<sup>1</sup> Le roi Frédéric à M. de Goltz, Berlin, 31 Decembre 1776; Potsdam, 16 Octobre, 30 Octobre, 13 Novembre, 17 Novembre, 27 Novembre 1777. Doniol; Tome I., Annexes du Chapitre 17.

<sup>2</sup> Graydon's *Memoirs*.

nation.<sup>1</sup> Frederic overflowed with excellent reasons for remaining neutral. He was always ready to explain, with ostentatious humility, how he was so poor, and so much of a landsman, as to be of no account whatever in a maritime war. England, (he said,) could raise the thirty-six million crowns, which each campaign cost her, more easily than he himself could borrow a florin. When a French philosopher inquired what part His Majesty would take in the approaching struggle on behalf of humanity, Frederic replied that, so far as he could discern the intentions of Mars and Bellona, the combatants would expend their mutual fury at sea; and that his own fleet unfortunately laboured under the disadvantage of containing neither ships, pilots, admirals, nor sailors. He was frequently urged to sanction a traffic, which could not fail to be lucrative, between the Prussian ports and the sea-board of the revolted colonies; but he answered, like a sound man of business, that the British Admiralty had eighty cruisers afloat, and that the capture of a single one of his own blockade-runners would sweep away the profits of the entire venture.<sup>2</sup>

Frederic the Great eluded the advances of the American Congress with the skill and astuteness of an old campaigner. During the year immediately succeeding the Declaration of Independence, the new Republic across the ocean was a terror and a bugbear in every Chancellery on the Continent of Europe. All the multitudinous blunders in administration and in war, which were made by that audacious and energetic population of Anglo-Saxon colonists, thrown unexpectedly on their own resources, were as nothing in comparison to the crude and haphazard quality of their early attempts at diplomacy. Congress, jealous of the individual, declined

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence*; Volume I., Introduction, Chapter 6.

<sup>2</sup> Le roi Frédéric au Comte de Maltzan, 13 Octobre 1777; à M. d'Alembert, 26 Octobre 1777; au Comte de Maltzan, 3 Juin 1776; à M. de Schulenburg, 16 Mai 1777.

to nominate a responsible Minister for Foreign Affairs ; and the external relations of the United States were entrusted to a committee fluctuating in numbers and composition, with no permanent Chairman or Secretary, and no authority to initiate a policy of its own. Important matters were openly debated, and decided by vote of the whole House, after the most confidential despatches from Madrid or Versailles had been read aloud at the table ; and, when Congress was not in session, the decision had to wait. The statesmen at Philadelphia conducted their diplomatic proceedings with no lack of spirit and vigour, and with a superabundance of startling originality. They began by procuring a copy of Vattel, "which was continually in the hands of members ;" and, if the book taught them nothing else, they might learn from its pages that every proposal, great or small, which they pressed on the attention of foreign Courts, was in flat and flagrant contradiction to the Law of Nations. They appointed a perfect swarm of envoys and agents, and invested them with extensive powers. They fixed the salaries of their ambassadors, and left them to be paid by the novel expedient of borrowing money from the Courts to which they were accredited. They arranged a separate cipher with each of their emissaries ;<sup>1</sup> they instructed him in the mysteries of invisible ink ; and they carefully specified the weight of shot which would be required to sink his bag of papers if ever, in the course of a voyage, the ship in which he travelled was in danger of being overhauled by a British frigate. And, above all, they laid down principles, and invented methods, which in process of time would have revolutionised the whole system of diplomacy, if they had been recommended for general imitation by success, instead of being discredited by notorious failure.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A curious specimen of these ciphers is given in a note on page 108 of the Second Volume of this history.

<sup>2</sup> Wharton's *Introduction*, Chapters 1 and 9. Franklin to Dumas ; Philadelphia, December 19, 1775. Arthur Lee to the Committee of

Among the authoritative canons of diplomacy are the three settled rules that an envoy should not be pressed upon a foreign Court which is unwilling to receive one; that, when proposals of an exceptional and momentous character are submitted to a foreign government, the case should be put forward with circumspection, and the ground carefully prepared beforehand; and that, where a nation is unable to command the services of professional diplomatists, its ambassadors should be men who have given proof of ability and discretion in other, and kindred, departments of State business. Benjamin Franklin, the only American who had had experience in dealing with European Cabinets, urged these considerations upon his brother-members; but the Lees and the Adamses, and those with whom they habitually acted, were enamoured of a theory which not even Franklin could induce them to abandon. The same political party within the walls of Congress, which believed in amateur generals, and advocated a headlong strategy in war, pinned its faith on amateur ambassadors, and maintained that all negotiations with external governments should be conducted in a blunt and uncereemonious style. "Militia diplomatists," (said John Adams,) "sometimes gain victories over regular troops, even by departing from the rules."<sup>1</sup> That was the doctrine of the hour; and the politicians who then guided the counsels of America acted up to it without qualification, and without reserve. They extemporised a diplomatic service by the easy process of nominating any American Whig who happened to be in Europe when

Secret Correspondence; June 3, 1776. Committee of Secret Correspondence to Captain Hammond; Baltimore, Jan. 2, 1777.

<sup>1</sup> John Adams to Robert R. Livingston; Feb. 21, 1782. Adams said, in the same letter, that a man might be unacceptable at the Court to which he was sent, and yet successfully accomplish the object of his mission. That would be true of those who, like Adams himself, and the younger Laurens, brought to the unaccustomed work of diplomacy an exalted character, and a strong intellect; but the typical American emissary, in the earlier period of the Revolution, was endowed with neither the one nor the other.



the Revolution broke out, and who had a mind for public employment. None of these ready-made ambassadors possessed any aptitude for their new vocation; their antecedents had often been dubious; and their subsequent history, in some cases, was nothing better than deplorable. Always without invitation, and for the most part in the teeth of strenuous remonstrances, they were despatched to the capital of every leading European country, or at all events as far across the frontier as they were allowed to penetrate. The acceptability of the individual envoy has always been accounted a prime factor in the success of his mission; but anything less resembling a *persona grata* cannot be pictured than an ex-barrister or commission agent, — with the gift of the tongue, but not of tongues, — forcing his way into a royal antechamber as the representative of a Republic which had never been officially recognised; begging in voluble and idiomatic English for a large loan of public money; and exhorting the Ministers of the Court, within whose precincts he had trespassed, to embark upon a course of treacherous hostility against a powerful monarch with whom they were living on terms of apparent amity.

Spain, of all the great European powers, required the most cautious and delicate handling. Her wars with England had left her embittered and vindictive, perilously weak and terribly poor. The British garrison at Gibraltar was a thorn in her side which she would risk a very serious operation to extract; but she discriminated between the various expedients that presented themselves for retaliating upon her ancient enemy. She was prepared to encourage disaffection, and to subsidise rebellion, among the Catholics of Ireland;<sup>1</sup> but she watched the revolt of the British colonies in America with small sympathy, and grave uneasiness on her own account. The population of the Spanish dependencies on the further side of the Atlantic

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Marquis de Grimaldi from Madrid to the Spanish Ambassador at Paris; 26 February 1777. Doniol; Tome I., Page 335.

far exceeded that of the mother-country. They were bound to Spain by no sentiment of patriotism, no affection for the reigning family, and no community of political rights and privileges. The union between the component parts of the empire depended exclusively on material force; and the material force of the Spanish Government had been reduced very low indeed.<sup>1</sup> Louis the Sixteenth's ministers were insistent in their proposal that both branches of the House of Bourbon should join in the crusade against England. But Charles the Third, and his able and honest Chief of the Cabinet, the Count Florida Blanca, listened to the suggestion with distrust and misgiving; and when, after long hesitation, and many qualms of conscience, they at length yielded to French importunity, they never ceased to suspect, in their inmost hearts, that their alliance with the American republic was a suicidal policy. Spanish Legitimists of pure blood believe, to this very hour, that all the subsequent misfortunes of their cause, and country, are due to the madness of the old Spanish Court in assisting the rebels of New England and Virginia against their lawful Sovereign.<sup>2</sup>

The Lees of Westmoreland County in Virginia, when the Revolution began, might plausibly be described by their admirers as the governing family of America.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft's *History of the common action of France and America in the War of Independence*; Chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> "The disregard of the Legitimist principle by France and Spain, between 1776 and 1782, led to the French Revolution, the invasion of Spain by the French, and to revolutions in all the Spanish possessions on the American Continent. The rebellions in Cuba, and the Philippines, are the last direct consequences of the help which Charles the Third gave the Americans in their War of Independence." These sentences are taken from an Address, presented to Don Carlos by some of his leading adherents during the recent conflict between the United States and Spain.

<sup>3</sup> "That band of brothers, intrepid and unchangeable, who, like the Greeks at Thermopylae, stood in the gap, in defence of their country, from the first glimmering of the Revolution in the horizon, through all its rising light, to the perfect day." This picture of the Lee family was drawn by John Adams, at the age of eighty-three. He put no shade into his group of portraits, although there was enough, and to spare, of it in one of the sitters. But it would be unjust to deny that all the Lees were sincere partisans of the Revolution.

Two of them were Signers; and one, the celebrated Richard Henry Lee, was an orator of great influence, and remarkable charm. Another pair of the brethren sought their fortune in England, — William as a merchant, and Arthur at the Bar. They plunged deep into the municipal politics of London, at a time when the London Corporation was a living and powerful force in the politics of the empire. William Lee, in 1775, was elected an alderman on the Wilkes ticket, after a heated contest in which his brother Arthur astonished the Liverymen by a display of that eloquence which was native in his family. Arthur Lee had considerable talent; and he might have played a fine part in the American Revolution if his self-esteem had not been in vast excess of his public spirit. His constitutional inability to see anything in his colleagues and comrades except their least pleasing and admirable qualities, and his readiness to imagine evil in them where none existed, marred his own usefulness as a servant of the people, and led him, in more than one instance, to inflict cruel and irreparable injury upon others. Such was the man who, in the spring of 1777, set off on the road to Madrid as the show ambassador of the United States. He heralded his approach by a memorial to the Court of Spain describing the American Republic as an infant Hercules who had strangled serpents in the cradle; and declaring, (with a change of metaphor inside the space of three sentences,) that the hour had come to clip the wings of Britain, and pinion her for ever. The Spanish ministers replied, quietly and curtly, that Lee, in his eagerness to serve his own country, had not considered the difficulties and obligations of those whom he was addressing. His progress southward was stopped short at Burgos by order of the Court; and, like other people who have not been wanted in Spain, he was gradually compelled to retreat beyond the Ebro to Vittoria, and thence expelled in rout and confusion back across the Pyrenees.

Arthur Lee did not stand alone in the frustration

of his hopes, and the collapse of his enterprise. His brother William, who had been appointed by Congress to be their national representative in Austria, was duly admonished that his presence would be unacceptable to the Emperor Joseph; and he was careful not to show himself within a hundred leagues of Vienna. Ralph Izard of South Carolina had for some years resided in Europe as "a gentleman of fortune." He was named American Minister at Florence; but he never passed the Alps; for the Grand Duke of Tuscany let him know by post that his credentials would not be recognised. The most disagreeably situated among all the batch of envoys was Francis Dana of Massachusetts, who had been told off to Russia, and who walked fearlessly into the she-bear's den. Catherine had no use for him. As a politic Sovereign she shrank from giving unnecessary offence to England; and a demure Bostonian was not the sort of foreign visitor whom, as a woman, she cared to have about her. Her ministers informed Dana that he must not so much as petition to be received at Court. He lived in mortifying isolation. Official society closed its doors against him; and his existence was studiously ignored by the English, who were the only people in St. Petersburg with whom he could exchange an intelligible sentence.<sup>1</sup> Rebuffed in every quarter of Europe, like so many commercial travellers forbidden to display their wares, the baffled diplomatists fell back upon Paris, where they led an aimless and restless existence; — interfering in the negotiations conducted by the American Legation at the Court of France; squabbling over their share in the

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *Introduction*; Chapter 14. Dana used to write in English to Verac, the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg; and Verac got his letters translated, and then answered in French. "It is very doubtful, Sir," (so Verac warned Dana on one occasion,) "whether the Cabinet of Her Imperial Majesty will consent to recognise the Minister of a Power which has not as yet, in their eyes, a political existence, and expose themselves to the complaints which the Court of London will not fail to make. . . . I ought to inform you that the Count Panin, and the Count d'Ostermann, do not understand English. This will render your communication with the ministers difficult."

fund available for the payment of their salaries; and sending monthly reports to Congress which, as often as not, failed to arrive at their destination. For the risks of communication by sea were so great that American state secrets were no secrets for the English Cabinet. The Republic had as many as twelve paid agents on the Continent of Europe, all of whom wrote home on every opportunity; and yet there was once a period of eleven months during which not a single line from any one of them reached Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> It was calculated that more than half the letters written by, and to, the American envoys in Europe were captured on deep water by British cruisers; and King George's servants in Downing Street were kept informed of the plans and intentions of Congress as promptly, as regularly, and as circumstantially as the Ministers of Congress abroad.

Arthur Lee, very soon after his return from Spain, started from Paris with the intention of presenting himself to Frederic the Great in the capacity of Minister for the United States at the Prussian Court. He was accompanied by a Secretary of Legation in the person of Stephen Sayre, an American born, who had been a Sheriff of London, and who had dipped deep in the politics of that city, where he more than once was in hot, and rather dirty, water. Lee, on his arrival at Berlin, was met by an official notification which, as far as he could puzzle out the language employed to convey it, indicated to him that his visit was an unexpected and unappreciated honour, but that he might remain in the city as a private individual, without assuming a diplomatic character.<sup>2</sup> He employed himself in drawing up a memorial which contained a great deal of advice about Frederic's own business,

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *Introduction*; Pages 461-466.

<sup>2</sup> Baron de Schulenburg to Arthur Lee; Berlin, May 20, and June 9, 1777. "I have received," (the Baron wrote,) "the letter which you did me the honour of writing to me yesterday; and I imagine, from its conclusion, that, on account of the difference of language, you did not, perhaps, take in the true sense some of the expressions which I used in our conversation."



enforced in a style curiously unsuited to that monarch's literary taste.<sup>1</sup> Lee, in what the King must have regarded as a tone of grandiose impertinence, lectured his Majesty on the advantages which he would reap by allowing American privateers to sell their prizes in Prussian harbours, and by supplying the American troops with arms and ammunition. Attacking his hero on what was supposed to be his weak side, Lee suggested to the Prussian ministers that, for every musket which their royal master exported to New England at a cost to himself of less than five dollars, he might carry back as much Virginian tobacco as would sell for forty dollars in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Frederic was deaf to these blandishments; and the American strangers, for want of more profitable occupation, passed much of their time in watching the soldiers of the most famous army in Europe go through their exercise. The letter, in which Arthur Lee communicated to General Washington his observations on the Potsdam discipline, suggests a suspicion that some Prussian subaltern, with a turn for mystification, must have attended him as his military cicerone. He reported that King Frederic's infantry, instead of taking aim, were taught to slant the barrel downwards so that the bullet would strike the ground ten yards in front of them. "This depression," wrote Lee, "is found necessary to counteract the elevation which the act of firing gives to the musket."<sup>3</sup> That was a lesson in practical marksmanship which the American Commander-in-Chief was at liberty to impart, for all that it was worth, to Colonel Morgan and his Virginian riflemen.

The King of Prussia, at that moment, would will-

<sup>1</sup> Lee confidently assured Frederic that he need not be afraid of England. "You have," he wrote, "no vessels of war to cause your flag to be respected. But, Sire, you have the best regiments in the world; and Great Britain, destitute as she is of wise counsels, is not so foolish as to incur the risk of compelling your Majesty to join your valuable forces to those of her rival."

<sup>2</sup> A. Lee to Schulenburg; June 7, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> A. Lee to Washington; Berlin, June 15, 1777.

ingly have dispensed with the presence at Berlin of any diplomatic representative of the English-speaking race. There had been times when the ambassador of Great Britain stood high in the favour of Frederic the Great. Sir Andrew Mitchell was his comrade of the camp, and the partner of his interior counsels, throughout the worst hardships and anxieties of the Seven Years' War; and he had been on excellent terms with Mitchell's successor, — that same James Harris who afterwards made a considerable figure as the first Earl of Malmesbury. Harris had very recently been promoted to St. Petersburg, and had been followed at Berlin by Hugh Elliot, a cadet of the house of Minto. Elliot possessed much of the family cleverness, and already was versed in the lighter aspects of several European Courts. He had served with spirit against the Turks, as a volunteer in the Russian army; but as yet he was only five-and-twenty, and no wiser than people of the same age who are not ambassadors. Frederic viewed the appointment as a personal slight upon himself, and told the Comte de Maltzan, his diplomatic representative in London, that he had half a mind to recall him, and replace him at the Court of St. James's by a captain of infantry. That was the way, (he said,) to repay the English government with like for like.<sup>1</sup>

While the king was in this humour he was informed that the servants of the British Embassy had broken into Arthur Lee's lodging, and purloined his box of secret papers, the contents of which had been copied out by a large staff of writers, and despatched to England. Frederic, who had been through graver troubles, did not lose his self-possession over an incident which had a redeeming feature in the eyes of the old cynic, inasmuch as it provided him with a fertile, and congenial, theme for banter and irony. "Oh, the worthy disciple," (he cried,) "of Lord Bute! What an incomparable personage is your God-

<sup>1</sup> Le roi Frédéric au Comte de Maltzan, Potsdam, 10 Octobre 1776; 27 Janvier, 24 Fevrier, 1779.

dam Elliot!<sup>1</sup> The English ought to blush for sending such ministers abroad." He vented his wrath, during the course of the next fortnight, in phrases of droll vehemence; but he was not disposed to bear hard upon a young man of promise who attempted no defence, and who appealed in becoming terms to the royal clemency. Elliot accepted the whole responsibility; declared, — truly or diplomatically, as the case might be, — that the British government had no share in a transaction which he acknowledged to be unjustifiable; and submitted himself humbly to the judgment of the King of Prussia. Regret was duly expressed by George the Third's Cabinet; and the Secretary of State rebuked Mr. Elliot for the impropriety of his conduct, and warned him that nothing except the generous behaviour of His Prussian Majesty had on this occasion prevented the necessity of removing him from his post.<sup>2</sup> Frederic's anger and annoyance, in point of fact, were directed rather against the victim, than the contriver, of the outrage. The King was only too well aware that the notice, which he had been obliged to take, of an international scandal arising within the circuit of his own capital, would be construed by the world at large as an indirect recognition of the American Republic. His hand had been forced, — a sensation which a strong man never relishes; and the effects

<sup>1</sup> Le roi Frédéric au Comte de Maltzan; Potsdam, 30 Juin 1777. Frederic did not easily tire of an old, or even a very old, jest; and, now that our countrymen had lost his good graces, he often applied to them that nickname by which, three centuries and a half before, they were known on the continent of Europe among people who did not love them. "If," said Joan of Arc, "there were a hundred thousand more Goddams in France than there are to-day, they should not have this kingdom."

<sup>2</sup> The tone of this communication from the English Foreign Office, and the substance of that which followed, indicate that Lord Suffolk had known a great deal more about the seizure of Lee's papers than he now chose to admit. "A little later, another despatch informs Mr. Elliot that the King of England had entirely overlooked the exceptional circumstances of the business, in consideration of the loyal zeal which occasioned them; and the despatch closes by the announcement that the expenses, incurred by Mr. Elliot, would be indemnified by the Crown." *Memoir of the Right Honourable Hugh Elliot*, by the Countess of Minto; Chapter 3.

of his disgust and resentment were soon apparent. Arthur Lee's mission came to an abrupt termination. His papers had been abstracted on the twenty-fifth of June; and before the last day of July he was back again in Paris. Four months afterwards he intimated to the Prussian government that his brother William was appointed to succeed him at Berlin; but Frederic had had enough of the Lees, and replied by a brief and peremptory refusal.<sup>1</sup> No sane man, in the face of such a prohibition, would venture to thrust himself into the territory of a monarch who had spent the seven best years of his life in proving that he could make himself supremely unpleasant to an invader.

The early relations between the United States of America, and the monarchies of Europe, may be studied with advantage by those writers who attach little or no importance to the personal factor in history. The prospects of the young Republic were seriously, and to all appearance irretrievably, damnified by the mismanagement of Congress; but the position was saved by the ability, the discretion, and the force of character of one single man. Benjamin Franklin was now past seventy. He had begun to earn his bread as a child of ten; he commenced as an author at sixteen; and he had ever since been working with his hands, and taxing his brain, unintermittently, and to the top of his power. Such exertions were not maintained with impunity. He kept his strength of will unimpaired, his mind clear and lively, and his temper equable, by a life-long habit of rigid abstemiousness; but he already felt the approach of painful diseases that tortured him cruelly before the immense undertaking, which still lay before him, had been half accomplished. In September 1776 he was elected Commissioner to France, by a unanimous Resolution of Congress. Franklin, in the highest sense of the term, was

<sup>1</sup> Baron de Schulenburg to A. Lee; Berlin, November 28, 1777.

a professional diplomatist; for he had passed sixteen years in England as Agent for his colony; and his individual qualities had gained for him a political influence, and a social standing, out of all proportion to the comparatively humble interests which he represented at the British Court. The ambassadors of the Great Powers, who were resident in London, treated him as one of themselves. He was old enough to be the father of most among them, and wise enough to be the adviser of all; and, towards the end of his time, they united in regarding him as in some sort the *doyen* of their body. Franklin's knowledge of European statesmen, and courtiers, taught him to anticipate nothing but failure and humiliation from the diplomatic methods which Congress favoured; and he had no confidence whatever in the emissaries whom it thought fit to employ. The acceptance of the laborious and perilous mission, to which he was now invited, presented itself to his mind in the light of an absolute duty. His feelings remain on record in a letter which he subsequently addressed to a friend who urged him, in those "tempestuous times," to take some care of himself, and of his own safety. "I thank you," he wrote, "for your kind caution; but, having nearly finished a long life, I set but little value on what remains of it. Like a draper, when one chaffers with him for a remnant, I am ready to say: 'As it is only the fag end, I will not differ with you about it. Take it for what you please.'"<sup>1</sup>

We are told that "before Franklin left for France he placed in the hands of Congress, then in dire necessity for want of money, all his available funds, knowing that, if the cause failed, his loan failed with it."<sup>2</sup> It was a paltry sum according to American standards of to-day; for the capital accumulated by the most famous inventor, and the most indefatigable municipal administrator, of his generation, amounted

<sup>1</sup> Franklin to David Hartley; April, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Wharton's *Introduction*; Chapter 10.



to just three thousand pounds: and, when the country grew poorer still, and it became doubtful whether Franklin would ever again see the colour of his money, he acquiesced in his probable loss with the resignation of a disinterested patriot.<sup>1</sup> He, and two of his grandsons, embarked in a sloop of war of sixteen guns, carrying a consignment of indigo which was to be sold in France for the purpose of defraying the initial expenses of the American Legation. The captain was charged by the Committee of Marine to make the Doctor's voyage pleasant, and to take his orders about speaking to any vessel which might be encountered on the way.<sup>2</sup> The weather was rough, and Franklin suffered much from an old man's ailment, aggravated by the tossing of the waves; but he never was fretful, and never at a loss for occupation and diversion. He confirmed, or corrected, his former observations on the temperature of the Gulf-stream; he experienced the emotion of being chased by a British war-ship; and, after a swift run of thirty days, he sailed into Quiberon Bay, accompanied, to the wonder and amusement of Europe, by two prizes laden with a large and varied assortment of goods, the value of which he doubtless could calculate more accurately and quickly than any other man on board.<sup>3</sup> When he had recovered sufficient health he travelled to Paris, where he was awaited by Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, whom Congress had associated with him on the Commission. Before the end of the year the three Americans had an interview with the Comte de Vergennes, and placed in his

<sup>1</sup> Twelve years afterwards Franklin took stock of his investment. "I have received," he wrote, "no interest for several years; and, if I were now to sell the principal, I should not get more than a sixth part. You must not ascribe this to want of honesty in our government, but to want of ability; the war having exhausted all the faculties of the country."

<sup>2</sup> *American Archives* for October 1776.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole to the Countess of Ossory; Dec. 17, 1776. Beaumarchais to Vergennes; 16 December, 1776. "The noise," wrote Beaumarchais, "made by the arrival of Franklin is inconceivable. This brave old man allowed his vessel to make two prizes on the way, in spite of the personal risk he thereby incurred. And we French permit ourselves to be afraid!"

hands a very brief and closely argued letter, which bore in every sentence the marks of condensation and excision by Franklin's pen. The Commissioners offered France and Spain the friendship and alliance of the United States; they made a promise, (which, as the event showed, was not theirs to give,) that a vigorously conducted war would expel the British from their settlements in the West Indies; they asked for thirty thousand firelocks and bayonets; and they proposed to hire from King Louis eight ships of the line, grounding their request on the analogy of the battalions which the Duke of Brunswick, and the Landgrave of Hesse, had placed at the disposal of England.<sup>1</sup> The French government returned a very civil, but guarded, answer; by word of mouth, and not on paper, in order that the envoys of Congress might have no compromising document to exhibit, or to mislay and lose. But the mere circumstance that proposals so audacious and unusual had not been summarily rejected by a Cabinet of responsible French ministers was a point gained for America, and a long step by France on the downward road which led straight to an English war.

The Marquis de Noailles, who then was French Minister at the Court of St. James's, had been instructed to assure the English Cabinet that Franklin's presence in Europe was a matter of no political significance whatsoever. Acting upon the maxim that a man is best able to deceive others when he is deceived himself, King Louis's Foreign Secretary was at the pains to compose an artful, and most insincere, despatch with the express intention of hoodwinking and misleading King Louis's ambassador. Vergennes informed Noailles that Doctor Franklin conducted himself modestly in Parisian society, where he had renewed acquaintance with some old friends, and was surrounded by a host of the curious. His conversation, which betokened the man of talent and intelligence, was in a

<sup>1</sup> Doniol; Tome I., Chapitre 8.

quiet and subdued tone; and his whole course of life was transparently candid and guileless.<sup>1</sup> There was something exquisitely absurd in this fancy portrait of Benjamin Franklin as a philosopher travelling in search of scientific facts, and actuated by a mild and amiable interest in the manners and customs of the foreign country where he chanced to find himself. Lord Stormont, the English ambassador in France, took occasion to warn the French government that the Doctor, simple as he seemed, had got the better of three successive English Foreign Ministers; and that he never was so formidable, and never so little to be trusted, as when he appeared to have no room in his mind for affairs of State.

Lord Stormont was right. Franklin had come to Europe for the sole purpose of engaging in a stern and single-handed conflict with the difficulties and problems of a supreme crisis; and the old man's tale of work during the next eight years was a record which has seldom been beaten. Europe, (it has been truly said,) was henceforward the centre of action, where the funds for carrying on the Rebellion were raised, and the supplies required by the American armies were mainly purchased. In Europe, moreover, as a consequence of the impossibility of prompt and regular communication across the seas with Congress, the diplomacy of the Republic was necessarily moulded. American privateers were fitted out, their crews enlisted, and their prizes sold, in European ports; and all controverted questions about the legal validity of their captures were examined and decided in Europe, and not in America. "It was by Franklin alone that these various functions were exercised. It was on Franklin alone that fell the enormous labour of keeping the accounts connected with these various departments."<sup>2</sup> He had

<sup>1</sup> Le Comte de Vergennes au Marquis de Noailles; 10 Janvier, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Wharton, in the tenth chapter of his *Introduction*, gives an exhaustive account of Franklin's work in France. His functions, (Wharton writes,) "were of the same general character as those which in England

no staff of clerks at his command, and no deft and devoted subordinates to collect information, to sift correspondence, to prepare despatches for signature, and to save their over-burdened chief from the infliction of a personal interview with all the idlers, and jobbers, and soldiers of fortune, and real or sham men of science, who daily thronged his door. His only assistant was his elder grandson,—a worthy youth who could write from dictation, and copy a letter in good round hand; but who did not possess, and never acquired, the art of drafting an important paper.

From other Americans then resident in Paris Franklin received little help, and a great deal of most unnecessary hindrance. Silas Deane, who had business knowledge and business aptitudes, was of service in arranging contracts, and inspecting warlike stores; and Deane, after Franklin's arrival in Europe, had the good sense to confine himself strictly within his own province. But Arthur Lee was an uneasy, and a most dangerous, yoke-fellow. Lee was a sinister personage in the drama of the American Revolution;—the assassin of other men's reputations and careers, and the suicide of his own. He now was bent on defaming and destroying Silas Deane, whom he fiercely hated, and on persuading the government at home to transfer Franklin to Vienna, so that he himself might remain behind in France as the single representative of America at the Court of Versailles. The group of politicians in Philadelphia, who were caballing against George Washington, maintained confidential, and not very creditable, relations with Arthur Lee at Paris. His eloquent brother was his mouthpiece in Congress; and he plied Samuel Adams with a series of venomous libels upon Franklin, which were preserved unrebuked, and too evidently had been read with pleasure. The best that can be said for Arthur Lee is that, in his personal dealings with the

are exercised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Admiralty Board, the War Secretaries, and the Courts of Admiralty."

colleagues whom he was seeking to ruin, he made no pretence of a friendship which he did not feel; and his attitude towards his brother envoys was, to the last degree, hostile and insulting. He found an ally in Ralph Izard, who lived at Paris, an ambassador *in partibus*, two hundred leagues away from the capital to which he was accredited; drawing the same salary as Franklin; denouncing him in open letters addressed to the President of Congress; and insisting, with querulous impertinence, on his right to participate in all the secret counsels of the French Court. Franklin for some months maintained an unruffled composure. He had never been quick to mark offences; and he now had reached that happy period of life when a man values the good-will of his juniors, but troubles himself very little about their disapproval. He ignored the provocation given by his pair of enemies, and extended to them a hospitality which they, on their part, did not refrain from accepting, although his food and wine might well have choked them.<sup>1</sup> But the moment came when his own self-respect, and a due consideration for the public interest, forbade Franklin any longer to pass over their conduct in silence; and he spoke out in a style which astonished both of them at the time, and has gratified the American reader ever since. He castigated Arthur Lee in as plain and vigorous English as ever was set down on paper, and informed Ralph Izard, calmly but very explicitly, that he would do well to mind his own business.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *Introduction*; Chapter 12.

<sup>2</sup> "It is true that I have omitted answering some of your letters, particularly your angry ones, in which you, with very magisterial airs, schooled and documented me as if I had been one of your domestics. I saw, in the strongest light, the importance of our living in decent civility towards each other, while our great affairs were depending here. I saw your jealous, suspicious, malignant, and quarrelsome temper, which was daily manifesting itself against Mr. Deane, and almost every other person you had any concern with. I therefore passed your affronts in silence; did not answer, but burnt, your angry letters; and received you, when I next saw you, with the same civility as if you had never wrote them." Franklin to Arthur Lee; Passy, 4 April, 1778.



Franklin, as long as he was on European soil, had no need to stand upon ceremony when dealing with a refractory fellow-countryman; for he was in great authority on that side of the Atlantic Ocean. Europe had welcomed and accepted him, not as a mere spokesman and agent of the government at Philadelphia, but as the living and breathing embodiment of the American Republic. No statesman would do business with anybody but Franklin. No financier would negotiate a loan except with him, or pay over money into other hands but his. "It was to Franklin that both the French and English ministries turned, as if he were not only the sole representative of the United States in Europe, but as if he were endowed with plenipotentiary power."<sup>1</sup> Nine-tenths of the public letters addressed to the American Commissioners were brought to his house; "and," (so his colleagues admitted,) "they would ever be carried wherever Doctor Franklin is."<sup>2</sup> He transacted his affairs with Louis the Sixteenth's ministers on a footing of equality, and, (as time went on,) of unostentatious but unquestionable superiority. Thomas Jefferson, an impartial and most competent observer, had on one occasion been contending that American diplomatists were always spoiled for use after they had been kept seven years abroad. But this, (said Jefferson,) did not apply to Franklin, "who was America itself when in France, not subjecting himself to French influence," but imposing American influence upon France, and upon the whole course and conduct of her national policy.

The fact was that the French ministry, in its relations to Franklin, had to reckon with a political phenomenon of exceptional nature, and portentous significance. The royal authority in France was uncontrolled by any effective, and continuously operating, machinery of national self-government; but that very

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *Introduction*; Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> John Adams to Jonathan Jackson; Paris, 17 November, 1782.

circumstance lent force and weight to public opinion, at those rare conjunctures when public opinion had been strongly moved. If ever the privileged, the moneyed, and the intellectual classes united in one way of thinking, their influence was all the more irresistible because it was not defined, and limited, by the provisions of a written constitution. The rest of the nation, below those classes, was a powerless and voiceless proletariat; while above them there was nothing except a handful of Viscounts and Marquises, the Royal ministers of the hour, who were drawn from their ranks, and lived in their society, and who were mortally afraid of their disapprobation, and still more of their ridicule. France, in the last resort, was ruled by fashion; and Franklin had become the idol of fashion like no foreigner, and perhaps no Frenchman, either before or since.

His immense and, (as he himself was the foremost to acknowledge,) his extravagant popularity was founded on a solid basis of admiration and esteem. The origin of his fame dated from a time which seemed fabulously distant to the existing generation. His qualities and accomplishments were genuine and unpretentious; and his services to the world were appreciated by high and low, rich and poor, in every country where men learned from books, or profited by the discoveries of science. His *Poor Richard*, — which expounded and elucidated a code of rules for the everyday conduct of life with sagacity that never failed, and wit that very seldom missed the mark, — had been thrice translated into French, had gone through many editions, and had been recommended by priests and bishops for common use in their parishes and dioceses. As an investigator, and an experimentalist, he was more widely known even than as an author; for he had always aimed at making natural philosophy the handmaid of material progress. Those homely and practical inventions, by which he had done so much to promote the comfort and convenience of the average citizen, had caused

him to be regarded as a public benefactor in every civilised community throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> His reputation, (so John Adams wrote,) was more universal than that of Leibnitz or Newton. "His name was familiar to government and people, to foreign countries, — to nobility, clergy, and philosophers, as well as to plebeians, — to such a degree that there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen, a valet, coachman, or footman, a lady's chambermaid, or scullion in the kitchen, who did not consider him a friend to humankind." If Franklin, at seventy years of age, had visited France as a private tourist, his progress through her cities would have been one long ovation; and her enthusiasm transcended all bounds when, coming as an ambassador from a new world beyond the seas, he appealed to French chivalry on behalf of a young nation struggling for freedom. "His mission," (said a French writer who was no blind partisan of Franklin,) "flattered all the bright and generous ideas which animated France. He caressed our happiest hopes, our most gilded chimæras. He came across the ocean to win liberty for his own country; and he brought liberty to us. He was the representative of a people still primitive and unsophisticated, — or who appeared so in our eyes. He professed no religious creed except tolerance, and kindness of heart. France, moved by a thousand passions and a thousand caprices, prostrated herself at the feet of a man who had

<sup>1</sup> The Franklin stoves were much used in Paris. One of the French ministers was asked whether he had as yet put them into his reception-rooms. "No," (he replied;) "for the English ambassador would not then consent to warm himself at my fire."

There was talk, among men of science, about George the Third having ordered the disuse at Kew Palace of lightning-conductors on the Franklin pattern; but the Doctor himself refused to be drawn into the controversy. "Disputes," he wrote, "are apt to sour one's temper and disturb one's quiet. I have no private interest in the reception of my inventions by the world, having never made, nor proposed to make, the least profit by any of them. The King's changing his *pointed* conductors for *blunt* ones is, therefore, a matter of small importance to me. If I had a wish about it, it would be that he rejected them altogether as ineffectual; for it is only since he thought himself, and his family, safe from the thunder of Heaven that he dared to use his own thunder in destroying his innocent subjects."

no caprices and no passions. She made him the symbol and object of her adoration; and Franklin took rank above Voltaire and Rousseau, by the side of Socrates."<sup>1</sup>

One such account must serve for all. It would be tedious, and superfluous, to multiply quotations from contemporary authors who have recorded the passionate devotion, and, (what in parallel cases has been a rare feature,) the invincible constancy and fidelity with which French society abandoned itself to the worship of Franklin. The wise old American was keenly alive to the excess, and the occasional absurdity, of the adulation by which he was encompassed. He had measured, more accurately than any man then living, the true and exact worth of Benjamin Franklin; and he did nothing whatever to encourage the exaggerated estimate of that personage which most Frenchmen, and all French women, persisted in cherishing. He lived his own life, and talked his own talk, and allowed the imaginative and emotional Parisians to make what they chose both of the one and the other. The French Government, anxious to keep their distinguished guest as far as possible removed from hostile supervision and impertinent curiosity, placed at his disposal a house and garden at Passy, which now is well within the circuit of the fortifications, but then was still "a neat village, on high ground, half a mile from the city."<sup>2</sup> Here Franklin dwelt, as pleasantly lodged as in an elm-shaded suburb of his own Philadelphia; superintending the education of his smaller grandson, who was a child of seven; entertaining Americans, young and old, at a quiet dinner on the Sunday afternoon; working, during

<sup>1</sup> *Le Dix-huitième Siècle en Angleterre* par M. Philarète Chasles, Professeur au Collège de France; Paris, 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin to Mrs. Margaret Stevenson; Passy, 25 January, 1779. John Adams, on his arrival in France, was greatly exercised at finding his brother Commissioner so desirably lodged,—"at what rent," (he said,) "I never could discover; but, from the magnificence of the place, it was universally suspected to be enormously high." It is now well ascertained that Monsieur Ray de Chaumont, under whom Franklin sat rent-free, was acting on behalf of the Government.

odd hours, in the Royal Laboratory, which stood close at hand; and making a show of drinking the Passy waters. He was seldom seen on foot in the streets of the capital; and he took his exercise, with conscientious regularity, in his garden when the sun shone, and within doors during the months of winter. "I walk," (so he told John Adams in November 1782,) "every day in my chamber. I walk quick, and for an hour, so that I go a league. I make a point of religion of it." When he appeared in public he was dressed in good broadcloth of a sober tint; conspicuous with his long straight hair, whitened by age, and not by art; and wearing a pair of spectacles, to remedy an old man's dimness of vision, and a cap of fine marten's fur, because he had an old man's susceptibility to cold.

Franklin's costume had not been designed with any idea of pleasing the Parisians; but it obtained an extraordinary success, and has left a mark on history. Fine gentlemen, with their heads full of the new philosophy, regarded his unembroidered coat, and unpowdered locks, as a tacit, but visible, protest against those luxuries and artificialities which they all condemned, but had not the smallest intention of themselves renouncing. He reminded them of everything and everybody that Jean Jacques Rousseau had taught them to admire. The Comte de Ségur declared that "Franklin's antique and patriarchal aspect seemed to transport into the midst of an enervated, and servile, civilisation a Republican of Rome of the time of Cato and Fabius, or a sage who had consorted with Plato." Some compared him to Diogenes, and some to Phocion, — about whom they can have known very little; for, if Phocion had been a Pennsylvanian of Anno Domini 1776, he would, beyond all question, have been a strenuous and uncompromising supporter of the British connection. Readers of *Émile*, who then comprised three-fourths of the fashionable world, delighted to recognise in the American stranger an express and living image of the Savoyard Vicar; and it was believed, with some reason, that his



views on religion nearly corresponded to those of Rousseau's famous ecclesiastic, although Franklin would most certainly have compressed his Profession of Faith into much shorter compass.<sup>1</sup> The great French ladies were attracted and fascinated by his quiet self-possession, his benign courtesy, and his playful, yet always rational, conversation. The ardour of Franklin's votaries sometimes manifested itself with an exuberance which made it difficult for him to keep his countenance. When he paid a visit to Madame d'Houdetot at her country residence in the Valley of Montmorency, his hostess, — attended by the solemn and inperturbable Marquis who then was her lover, as he was the lover in turn of the most celebrated blue-stockings of that generation, — came forth to meet him, as if he were a royal personage, before he entered the avenue. She greeted him with an address in verse; at dinner he was regaled by a rhymed compliment, from some Count or Viscount, between every course, and after the coffee; Monsieur d'Houdetot himself, "rising to the sublime of absurdity in his quality of husband," instituted an elaborate parallel between Franklin and William Tell, to the disadvantage of the Swiss patriot; and the departing guest was ultimately pursued to his coach-door by a shower of laudatory couplets. To exhibit himself as the central figure in such scenes was not the least among the sacrifices which Franklin made upon the altar of his country.

<sup>1</sup> "Ambassadors," (so a French diplomatist informed John Adams,) "have in all Courts a right to a chapel of their own way; but Mr. Franklin never had any. . . . Mr. Franklin adores only great Nature, which interested many people of both sexes in him." European society entertained exceedingly vague ideas with regard to Franklin's religious creed. Some Parisians were deeply impressed by his "Quaker humility," and Horace Walpole spoke of him as a Presbyterian. Philarette Chasles came nearer the mark, and pronounced him a Deist of the school of Locke. But Franklin was no man's disciple, and his opinions and beliefs were the home-growth of his own mind. He had been converted to Deism, at the age of twenty-one, by a sermon preached against the Deists, "whose arguments," he said, "which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations."

Franklin dined abroad on every weekday;<sup>1</sup> not because people thought it their duty to invite him, but because they never could have too much of his company. John Adams, before he himself spoke French at all, gave a disparaging account of Franklin's grammar and accent; but Frenchmen praised the ease and skill with which he employed their language; and that is the one point on which no true Parisian will ever condescend to flatter. The banquets which he attended did not afford him unmixed enjoyment; for he was almost sure of meeting some officer who wanted to become a Major General in the American army, or some chemist with an invention for blowing up the English fleet, and who only waited to begin their attack upon him until he had been "put in good humour by a glass or two of champagne." The world then dined at two in the afternoon; the party broke up as soon as the dinner had been eaten; and Franklin's evenings were very generally spent at the house of his neighbour, Madame Helvétius, who lived beyond him at Auteuil, in the direction of the Bois de Boulogne. In this lady's salon he consorted with the most prominent of his brother Academicians; for he had long ere this been elected a member of their august body. Diderot and Morellet, Lavoisier, d'Alembert, Condorcet, and Turgot were his habitual associates, and his attached friends. In Paris and at Auteuil alike, during the give and take of the best conversation which the Continent of Europe then had to show, Franklin never missed an opportunity of interesting his companions in the cause of America, and re-assuring them about her future. An undaunted and persuasive optimist, speaking with the authority of one who was no mere amateur in war, he imparted to all around him his own loyal confidence in Washington's strategy; and, at the lowest moment of his country's fortunes, he boldly and cheerfully proclaimed his settled conviction that it was not the British who had taken Philadelphia, but Philadelphia which had

<sup>1</sup> Franklin to Mrs. Margaret Stevenson; Passy, 25 January, 1779.

taken the British.<sup>1</sup> No less a writer than the Marquis de Condorcet has borne witness to the tact and ability, and the all but universal acceptance, with which Franklin handled the topic of America. "It was an honour," said Condorcet, "to have seen him. People repeated in all societies what they had heard him say. Every entertainment which he accepted, every house where he consented to go, gained him new admirers who became so many partisans of the American Revolution."

He was a great ambassador, of a type which the world had never seen before, and will never see again until it contains another Benjamin Franklin. Tried by the searching test of practical performance, he takes high rank among the diplomatists of history. His claims to that position have been vindicated, in a manner worthy of the subject, by an eminent American publicist of our own generation. There were conspicuous statesmen, (writes Doctor Wharton,) at the Congress of Vienna; but the imposing fabric constructed by Metternich, and Nesselrode, and Talleyrand, with such lofty disregard for national liberties and popular rights, has long ago perished, while Franklin's work endures to this hour. It was Franklin who introduced America, on a footing of equality, into the councils of Europe, and who, in a truer sense than Canning, called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old. And the crown and coping-stone of his protracted labours was that final treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States, which of all international settlements is "the one that has produced the greatest blessings

<sup>1</sup> Six weeks after Franklin's arrival in Paris, the Prussian envoy in France sent the following account of him to King Frederic. "Le Docteur Franklin n'est pas le médecin Tant-Pis. Toutes les fois qu'on lui annonce que les Américains ont été battus, il dit : 'Tant mieux. Les Anglais seront bien attrapés.'" When people talked to him despondently about the prospects of American Independence, Franklin would reply : "Ça ira, Ça ira ;" and it is said that he thus brought into fashion a phrase destined to be the watchword of the French Revolution.

to both the contracting parties, has been of the greatest benefit to civilisation as a whole, and has been the least affected by the flow of time.”<sup>1</sup>

The treaty of 1782, and the recognition by England of American Independence, were still in the distant future; but, during the early weeks of Franklin's domestication in the neighbourhood of Paris, it became evident to all concerned that the affairs of the new Republic were in firm and capable hands. Originality, unalloyed by any tincture of eccentricity, marked every private letter, and public memorandum, which issued from the library at Passy. Franklin's breadth and accuracy of knowledge, the force and acuteness of his reasoning, and the “masculine simplicity” of his style, impressed veteran French ministers with a sensation which was most unusual in their experience of official business. The relations between America, and all European countries except France, had been gravely compromised by the premature, and ill-considered, action of Congress; and, for some while to come, Franklin was occupied, not so much in engineering diplomatic successes, as in effacing disagreeable impressions. He began very quietly to court the favour, and invite the confidence, of all the foreign ambassadors then resident in Paris. The representatives, (we are told,) of those Sovereigns, who had not recognised the government of the United States, were unable to extend any official civilities to the Commissioners of the Republic; but in private they sought the acquaintance of Franklin, and among them were some of his most esteemed and intimate friends.<sup>2</sup> He soon was on excellent terms with the Spanish Minister, the Comte d'Aranda; and he established a claim on the gratitude of Prince Bariatinski, the Russian ambassador, who was helped out of a very formidable scrape by the famous American's native good sense and inexhaustible good-

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *Digest of International Law*, as quoted in the tenth Chapter of his *Introduction*.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Doctor Franklin*, by Jared Sparks; Chapter 10.

nature.<sup>1</sup> Franklin's personal popularity, during the later period of the war, was of invaluable service to his political efficiency; and the rapid growth of anti-English sentiment, all the Continent over, was due almost as much to his personal influence as to the recklessness, and maladroitness, of Lord North's Cabinet. The time came when Lord Shelburne told the House of Peers, with a near approach to the truth, that George the Third had but two enemies upon earth;—one, the whole world, and the other, his own Ministry.

When Franklin landed in France, Beaumarchais expressed a friendly uneasiness lest the old man, left to his own guidance "in that cursed country of meddling and gossip," should fall into bad hands, and commit some fatal blunder or indiscretion. It was sympathy wasted. The Pennsylvanian veteran had the craft of age without its feebleness; and, during the next six or seven years, the statesmen of France, and Spain, and Holland were destined to learn by unpleasant experience that, whoever was left in the lurch, it would not be Benjamin Franklin. From the very first moment of his arrival in Paris he set himself deliberately, and most artfully, at work to tempt Louis the Sixteenth's Cabinet deeper and deeper into a policy which was the salvation of America, but which in the end brought utter ruin upon the French Monarchy.

When the American Revolution broke out, and for some while afterwards, the French Government pursued a line of conduct in accord with the true interests of their own country, and consistent with the letter, if not with the spirit, of their obligations towards the Government of England. The Comte de Vergennes pronounced Lord North's attempt to subjugate the colonies by arms as "an undertaking against Nature;"

<sup>1</sup> The story, which is most characteristic of Franklin, is told in the Third Appendix to this volume.



injurious, in any event, to Great Britain, and replete with profit to France, if only France would remain quiet, and allow the civil war to run its course beyond the Atlantic. There was nothing, (Vergennes wrote,) which need afflict the Court of Versailles in the spectacle of England tearing herself to pieces with her own hands. It soon became evident that a golden and unexpected opportunity had arisen for the development of French commerce. Great Britain's export-trade to America had been killed outright; and her mercantile intercourse with the rest of the world was sorely hampered by the activity and audacity of the American privateers. Arthur Lee told the Committee of Foreign Affairs at Philadelphia how the Abbé Raynal, who had just returned from London, informed him that nothing disgusted the English so much as seeing their ports crowded by French ships, which were engaged in carrying on the commerce of England with other nations. "Their merchants," said Lee, "are obliged to have recourse to this expedient to screen their merchandise. They have been driven to this necessity by the number and success of your cruisers in and about the Channel."<sup>1</sup> The aspect of foreign-built vessels, taking in cargoes of home-made goods alongside the wharves of the Thames, the Mersey, and the Bristol Avon, was gall and wormwood to British ship-owners; but the British ministry favoured the continuance, and connived at the irregularities, of the traffic, because the employment of neutral merchantmen was essential for the dispersion abroad of those manufactures on which the prosperity of the kingdom already mainly depended.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Lee from Paris; September 9, 1777. "It is plain," wrote Washington, "that France is playing a politic game; enjoying all the advantages of our commerce without the expense of war."

<sup>2</sup> "From this invasion of the American trade by foreigners one advantage is derived, if not to the commerce and navigation, yet to the manufactures of England; for these foreign nations, not having yet got into the way of providing a proper assortment of goods for the American market, resort hither for supply. This is felt in all the manufacturing

If France had been content to maintain a pacific attitude throughout the whole period of the American troubles, she would have been rewarded by an immense accession of wealth, and a secure and exalted position among the nations of the world. Those advantages, moreover, would have accrued to her automatically and inevitably, without risk or exertion on her own part, and, which was a more important consideration still, with no sacrifice of her public honour. But the intrigues of Beaumarchais had already committed Louis the Sixteenth and his ministers to a perilous, and worse than questionable, series of transactions; and, from this time forward, the energy and pertinacity of Franklin allowed them no rest, until they had sinned against their international duty too heinously to be forgiven by the people and the parliament of England. The influence of the great American Commissioner was apparent in every department of French administration. King Louis was timid and conscientious, and he had for his Finance Minister a cautious and frugal Swiss banker; but certain members of the Cabinet, who counted for a great deal more than either His Majesty or Monsieur Necker, were always as eager to give as Franklin was bold to ask. The American Commissioners were soon accommodated with a loan of two million francs, bearing no interest, and to be repaid only "when the United States were settled in peace and prosperity." Another million came from the Farmers General, in exchange for a permission to purchase twenty thousand hogsheads of tobacco, at local prices, from the warehouses of Maryland and Virginia. Four millions, ten millions, and six millions were afterwards forthcoming in three successive years; and the total money obtained from France, at the solicitation of Franklin, amounted at last to six and twenty million francs. These great sums were thriftily, and very knowingly, expended on the purchase of mili-

towns; and the Ministry owe much of their quiet, during the present contention, to that source." History of Europe in the *Annual Register* for 1776; Chapter 9.

tary stores for Washington's armies, and on the equipment of American cruisers which preyed upon British commerce in European waters.<sup>1</sup>

Not a few of those cruisers were American only in name. When the sloop of war which conveyed Franklin across the ocean had deposited him at his destination, she ranged the Channel in company with two consorts, the Lexington and the Dolphin, the latter of which was armed with French cannon, and manned exclusively by French sailors. Within a few weeks the three ships made fifteen prizes; and their list of captures reached an enormous figure before any of them met their fate. When the Lexington was at last taken, her log-book, and the letters and papers found on board of her, proved that she had burned, sunk, and destroyed fifty-two British merchantmen.<sup>2</sup> The American captains found, in the harbours of Normandy and Brittany, a sure refuge from danger, a ready market for their prize-goods, and all indispensable facilities for repairing, re-fitting, and re-arming their vessels. They sailed in and out of Havre, and Lorient, and Nantes, taking in fifty barrels of gunpowder at one place, and filling up their crews with prime French sailors at another, as coolly and freely as if France were already at war with England. When the English ambassador remonstrated, the Versailles Cabinet gave him fair words, and ostentatiously prohibited any future breach of neutrality in sham orders which, after a brief show of obedience, were openly and systematically disregarded by the port authorities. If such things were done on the very coast of France, within forty leagues of her capital, it may well be believed that violence, and illegality, ran riot in distant quarters of the globe which lay outside the range of diplomatic surveillance and protest. The British trade with the West Indies was devastated by ten or a dozen large corsairs, which hailed from Mar-

<sup>1</sup> Franklin, Deane, and Lee to the Committee of Secret Correspondence; Paris, January 17, 1777. Wharton's *Introduction*; Chapters 4 and 10.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Samuel Curwen; October 4, 1777.

tinique and Guadeloupe; and which, though they displayed the Stars and Stripes, and carried letters of marque from Congress, were to all intents and purposes not American privateers, but French pirates. Out of a hundred and twenty-five fighting men, on board one of these formidable vessels, only two were citizens of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Ministers of King Louis, with less and less effort at concealment, hurried forward their military and naval preparations for a war which they had long foreseen, and which they now began to anticipate with lively satisfaction. A very strong squadron was assembled at Toulon, and an exceedingly powerful fleet at Brest. According to the advices which reached London, twenty-five frigates lay equipped for active service in Brest Harbour, as well as no fewer than thirty sail of the line, of which ten had been finished off within the last eighteen months. "These ships," (so the reporter stated,) "are supposed, by many judicious people in marine architecture, to be the finest moulded, and best built and completed, in the whole French navy, and perhaps in Europe. Upwards of ten

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire Justificatif pour servir de Réponse à l'Exposé des Motifs de la Conduite du Roi de France relativement à l'Angleterre*; Londres, 1779. This masterpiece by Edward Gibbon, written in the French language with an Englishman's accuracy of statement, and concentration of purpose, was a special favourite with Lord Macaulay. In his copy of Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works* he drew, with his pencil, a line of approbation down the entire margin of all its thirty-four pages. That was a compliment which, in the case of similar productions, he reserved for one or two of Swift's Examiners, and for three or four of Paul Louis Courier's inimitable pieces.

The *Evening Post* of May 31, 1777, gives a list of French privateers in the West Indies, with their gun-power, and the strength of their complements. They mostly carried above a hundred men, and from fourteen to eighteen cannon. A gentleman in the island of Grenada wrote to a friend in Liverpool that it was not the Americans, but the French from Martinique and St. Lucie who were buccaneering in those seas. "It is now," he said, "become customary, as soon as a man hears that his vessel is taken, to go directly to Martinique, and buy as much as he can of his own property in again, as things are sold pretty cheap for cash. They are very expeditious with their sales; for they neither wait for condemnation, nor any other form."

thousand shipwrights, carpenters, caulkers, riggers, blockmakers, sailmakers, and ropemakers are collected at Brest. Every sailor has been ordered thither, from Dunkirk to Bayonne; and the Guinea, the Newfoundland, and the West Indian ships dare not put to sea till this fleet is manned and victualled."<sup>1</sup> It was a still more ominous circumstance that a great number of regiments had been drawn down to the coast, and embodied in what was only too evidently intended for an army of invasion. Everything was ready. Biscuit for two months had been baked. Provisions were very cheap, and all the magazines full. The rank and file were punctually paid, and well clothed and disciplined. The old and the weak had been carefully weeded out from every battalion; and twenty-five thousand troops, the most effective in France, stood prepared for embarkation at a day's notice. The French naval officers were full of fight, and their tongues were loud and unbridled. They looked to a war with England for the acceleration of their wretchedly slow promotion, and for the sadly needed rehabilitation of their professional repute. A young nobleman, — who, gallant and ambitious as he was, thought the war a crime, — has related how, from admiral to midshipman, they all rejoiced at the prospect of avenging those humiliating defeats which, half a generation before, had been inflicted on the French navy by Hawke and Boscawen.<sup>2</sup>

The strain was too severe to last. In the first week of December, 1777, tidings of Burgoyne's surrender arrived in Europe. On the way back from Passy, whither he had hurried to congratulate Franklin, Beaumarchais was thrown out of his carriage, and narrowly escaped a fatal accident. As soon as the surgeon allowed him ink and paper, he addressed the Comte de Vergennes in a vein of not very decorous exultation.

<sup>1</sup> It then was a common practice, when war appeared imminent, to detain merchant vessels in harbour, so as to prevent a competition for the services of seamen between the State, and the private employer.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires du Duc des Cars*; Tome I., Chapitre 5.



"This propitious event," he wrote, "is balm to my wounds. Some god has whispered in my ear that King Louis will not disappoint the hopes of the faithful friends whom America has acquired for herself in France. It is my voice which calls out on their behalf from beneath my blankets: 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, Oh Lord! Lord, hear my prayer!'" Beaumarchais, as at this period of his life was generally the case, spoke the mind of Paris. When the news of Saratoga spread abroad in the city, the partisans of England disappeared from view; the theatres resounded with martial demonstrations; and the buzz of drawing-rooms and coffee-houses swelled into a unanimous cry for war. The demand in France for vigorous and immediate action was re-inforced by a potent auxiliary from beyond her own borders. When the New Year opened, the Elector of Bavaria died; the Emperor of Austria moved his troops across the Bavarian frontier; and Frederic the Great perceived that for himself, and for Prussia, the fateful hour had come. Resolved, so far as in him lay, that the French armies should be employed elsewhere than in Germany, he redoubled his efforts to tempt, and drive, Louis the Sixteenth into open hostilities against the British Crown. In a series of jumbled metaphors, which he would never have ventured to use when writing to Voltaire, he commanded his envoy in Paris to be all eyes and ears, to sift the matter to the bottom, and to shake every sail loose. "This," wrote the King, "is the moment for exerting yourself to the summit of your strength. You must force the deaf to hear, and the blind to see; and be sure that you wake up the lethargic to some purpose."<sup>1</sup>

The French Government did not need pressing. A hint was conveyed to Doctor Franklin, and his colleagues, that it would be agreeable to His Majesty if they renewed the offer which they had made him a

<sup>1</sup> Le Roi Frédéric à M. de Goltz, Berlin, 12 Janvier; Potsdam, 11 Février, 1778. These exhortations are written by the king's own hand, as a postscript to the official despatches.

twelvemonth back; and they acted on the intimation given. Some time was consumed in arranging the preliminaries; it was necessary that Spain should be consulted, or at all events kept informed, at each successive stage of the negotiation; but on the sixth of February 1778 the signatures were affixed to a Treaty of Commerce, and a Treaty of Amity and Alliance, between France and the United States. The French Government, paying a tribute by anticipation to the principle of the Monroe Doctrine, solemnly disclaimed all intention to re-conquer Canada. No condition whatever was exacted from America, except a promise that she would never purchase peace with Great Britain by consenting to resume her subjection to the British Crown. The ancient monarchy had dealt very handsomely with the young Republic; and the Prime Minister of Spain, who did his best to delay the business, and who disliked it all the more because he feared that his own Court would be compelled before long to follow suit, pronounced the conduct of the Versailles Cabinet a glaring instance of Quixotism. He compared the American Commissioners to those Roman Consuls whom the kings of Pontus and Cappadocia approached, in the attitude of suppliants, with a humble petition for their aid and support in war.<sup>1</sup>

On the twentieth March those Commissioners were granted the honour of a public reception at the Court of France. An immense throng assembled to watch Franklin pass. His bust and portrait had been multiplied by tens of thousands all the kingdom over; his miniature was carried in the lids of snuff-boxes, in watch-cases, and in the setting of rings; and the Gazettes of Europe, (said one who grudged him his celebrity,) contained a greater number of panegyrics on Franklin than on any other individual who had been born since Gazettes were printed. And now the whole tribe of his admirers, high and humble, had an oppor-

<sup>1</sup> Doniol; Tome II., Chapitres 10, 11; Tome III., Chapitre 1.

tunity of seeing the man himself, at the culminating hour of his prolonged and notable career. He was greeted by acclamations, and clapping of hands, in the streets of the town, in the quadrangles of the Palace, and even in the corridors which he traversed on his way to the Presence Chamber. The first meeting between the King of France, and the delegates of the American Commonwealth, was a memorable and suggestive, but almost a silent, interview. On such occasions Louis the Sixteenth seldom found much to say, and never said the right thing; and the obligation to speak a sentence or two of spirited and sympathetic welcome, in the name of France, would have disconcerted even a cleverer, and a less honest, monarch. For at the bottom of his heart the King had not yet learned to love rebels; and he agreed with his more sober-minded subjects in regarding the contemplated assault upon England as "the most indecent of all wars."<sup>1</sup> Franklin has left no account of the ceremony; but it is on record that Versailles struck him as exceedingly dirty, and he doubtless would have liked well to give it the thorough scouring which, under his supervision, had so often been bestowed on the public buildings of Philadelphia. Meanwhile the signature of the treaties was no longer a State secret. The Marquis de Noailles had already placed the British Court in possession of the facts, with a display of frankness which came very near to impudence. King Louis, (so the communication ran,) was determined to cultivate the good intelligence notoriously subsisting between France and Great Britain, and had accordingly commissioned his ambassador to inform King George of a transaction so interesting to both countries. That was not the kind of honey to make such a dose palatable in England.<sup>2</sup>

Each of the two contracting parties was solemnly and specifically bound by the Treaty of Paris "to give no succour or protection, directly or indirectly," to the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires du Duc des Cars*; Tome I., Chapitre 5.

<sup>2</sup> Doniol; Tome II., Chapitre 12.

enemies and assailants of the other ; and this was the manner in which the French observed their side of the engagement. They had caught England at a frightful disadvantage. She had not an ally in the world. The conflict with American rebellion had been a heavy drain upon her pecuniary resources, and had gravely impaired her credit. The price of her Consols had already fallen twenty points. Her field-army, and all the foreign auxiliaries whom she had been able to muster, were three thousand miles away across the ocean ; and the British Islands were left very slenderly garrisoned at a moment when the naval strength of Britain had been allowed to drop far below the standard of safety. That was the pass to which our country had been reduced by the ineptitude and improvidence of her rulers. The apparent weakness, and the undoubted isolation, of England had tempted, and excited, the unprincipled ambition of the French Ministers ; but, as has happened so often before and since, they had omitted to reckon with the haughty patriotism, the stern and dogged temper, and the indomitable pertinacity of the English people.

Lord North's colonial policy, from first to last, was condemned and opposed by perhaps the largest, and certainly the best and wisest, section of the British community ; but all men, of both parties, were of one and the same mind with reference to the French quarrel. They entertained no illusion about the difficulties and perils of the situation. They knew that, for many months to come, the war would be a struggle for the defence of hearth and home ; but they were firmly resolved, before the account was closed, to make the French repent their cupidity, their insolence, and their treachery. The public indignation blazed up fierce and high. The more turbulent members of a nation which had been so often, and so egregiously, befooled by French ambassadors, paid very little regard to the sanctity of the diplomatic person ; and the Marquis de Noailles, who left London at daybreak in order to avoid insult, was pelted as he passed through the streets of

Canterbury on his road to Dover. Lord Stormont was at once recalled from Paris. The British Inspector of Fortifications at Dunkirk was forced to pack up his trunks, and leave the country ; and this time he did not go back when the war was over. His presence on French soil constituted the one, and only, genuine grievance which France could allege against the British Government ; and that grievance might easily have been remedied, with mutual consent, by a bloodless and amicable negotiation between the Foreign Offices of London and Versailles. It was a sorry spectacle, and a sad example, when the two leading nations of Europe were plunged headlong into an unnecessary, and objectless, war ; from which, after a world-wide crash of arms, and a prodigal outpouring of treasure, they emerged at the end of five years with less than no gain, and very little glory.



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

See page 91.

#### *General Schuyler, and the New England Troops*

THE situation is described in a curious contemporary letter written from the camp in July, 1775. Accompanying Colonel Hinman's regiment, as chaplain, was the Reverend Cotton Mather Smith, of Sharon, well known through Western Connecticut as Parson Smith. He wrote to his wife :

"You wish to know if the rumours about General Schuyler are true ; if he is secretly a Tory ; saying that you are requested to ask me. My dear wife, they are *not* true. Say this, to any who ask you, on my authority ; for I speak whereof I do *know*. General Schuyler is as earnest a patriot as any in our land, and has few superiors in any respect. I do grieve that so many of our New England men should so fail to do him justice. Yet they are not quite without excuse, not for their suspicions, but for their dislike. The General is somewhat haughty and overbearing. He has never been accustomed to seeing men that are reasonably well taught, and able to give a clear opinion, and to state their grounds for it, who were not also persons of some wealth and rank ; and when our blacksmith came up to the General, without any preliminaries, to offer him some information and advice, but withal not disrespectfully, the General, — albeit the information was of importance, and should have speedy attention, — spake very sharply to the poor man, and bade him begone. He could easily have seen that the man meant no harm, and was far more intelligent than the most of his *stupid Dutchmen*, as I grieve to say that our North Eastern men are too apt to call 'em. But it was not until I had explained to him that the man was well descended, and only a blacksmith by reason that his grandfather's English estates had been forfeited to the Crown, that the General could be prevailed upon to listen to him. This is our commander's one weakness, and

I would not have you to repeat it to any one. On the other hand, our men are much too free with their strictures. Full one-third of my time is taken up in trying to make them see that we have no warrant for suspicions of him, and every reason for the greatest confidence."<sup>1</sup>

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## APPENDIX II

See page 342.

*Extract from George Washington's letter to Jonathan Trumbull of October 18, 1780*

"The intervals between the dismissal of one army, and the collection of another, have more than once threatened us with ruin, which, humanly speaking, nothing but the supineness and folly of the enemy could have saved us from. How did our cause totter at the close of 1776, when, with a little more than two thousand men, we were driven before the enemy through the Jerseys, and obliged to take post on the other side of the Delaware, to make a show of covering Philadelphia; while in reality nothing was more easy to them, with a little enterprise and industry, than to make their passage good to that city, and dissipate the remaining force which still kept alive our expiring position! What hindered them from dispersing our little army, and giving a fatal blow to our affairs, during all the subsequent winter, instead of remaining in a state of torpid inactivity, and permitting us to hover about their quarters, when we had scarcely troops sufficient to mount the ordinary guards? After having lost two battles, and Philadelphia, in the following campaign, — for want of those numbers, and that degree of discipline, which we might have acquired by a permanent force in the first instance, — in what a cruel and perilous situation did we again find ourselves in the winter of 1777 at Valley Forge, within a day's march of the enemy, with a little more than a third of their strength, unable to defend our position, or retreat from it for want of the means of transportation!"

<sup>1</sup> Tuckerman's *Life of Schuyler*; Chapter 4.

## APPENDIX III

See page 466.

*Franklin, and the Russian Embassy*

The heir to the throne of Russia spent some weeks in Paris, under the title of the Comte du Nord. He sent round cards to the foreign ambassadors, with his name, and that of Prince Bariatinski, written on them. The messenger, acting in ignorance, left one of them at Franklin's house ; and Franklin accordingly drove to the Russian Embassy, and ordered his name to be written in the porter's book. The unfortunate ambassador foresaw what the Empress Catherine would say, and only too probably would do, when it was brought to her ears, that her son, and her servant, had taken upon themselves to acknowledge the American Republic. In his distress Prince Bariatinski sent a friend to ask advice from Franklin, who settled the difficulty by making what, to him, was the very easy sacrifice of his own self-importance. "I told them," he said, "that I should not have voluntarily intruded a visit, and that, in this case, I had only done what I was informed the etiquette required of me ; but, if it would be attended with any inconvenience to Prince Bariatinski, whom I much esteemed and respected, I thought the remedy was easy. He had only to erase my name out of his book of visits received ; and I would burn their card."

The Grand Duke Paul, who had a weakness for a great man, and would fain have been one himself, contrived, not very long afterwards, to meet Franklin at the hotel of the Comte de Vergennes.



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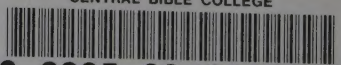
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